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Sir Iainian;

A

Tale of Chivalry:

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

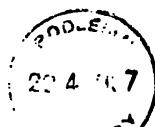
"Legends of the Dunbars."

London:

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.

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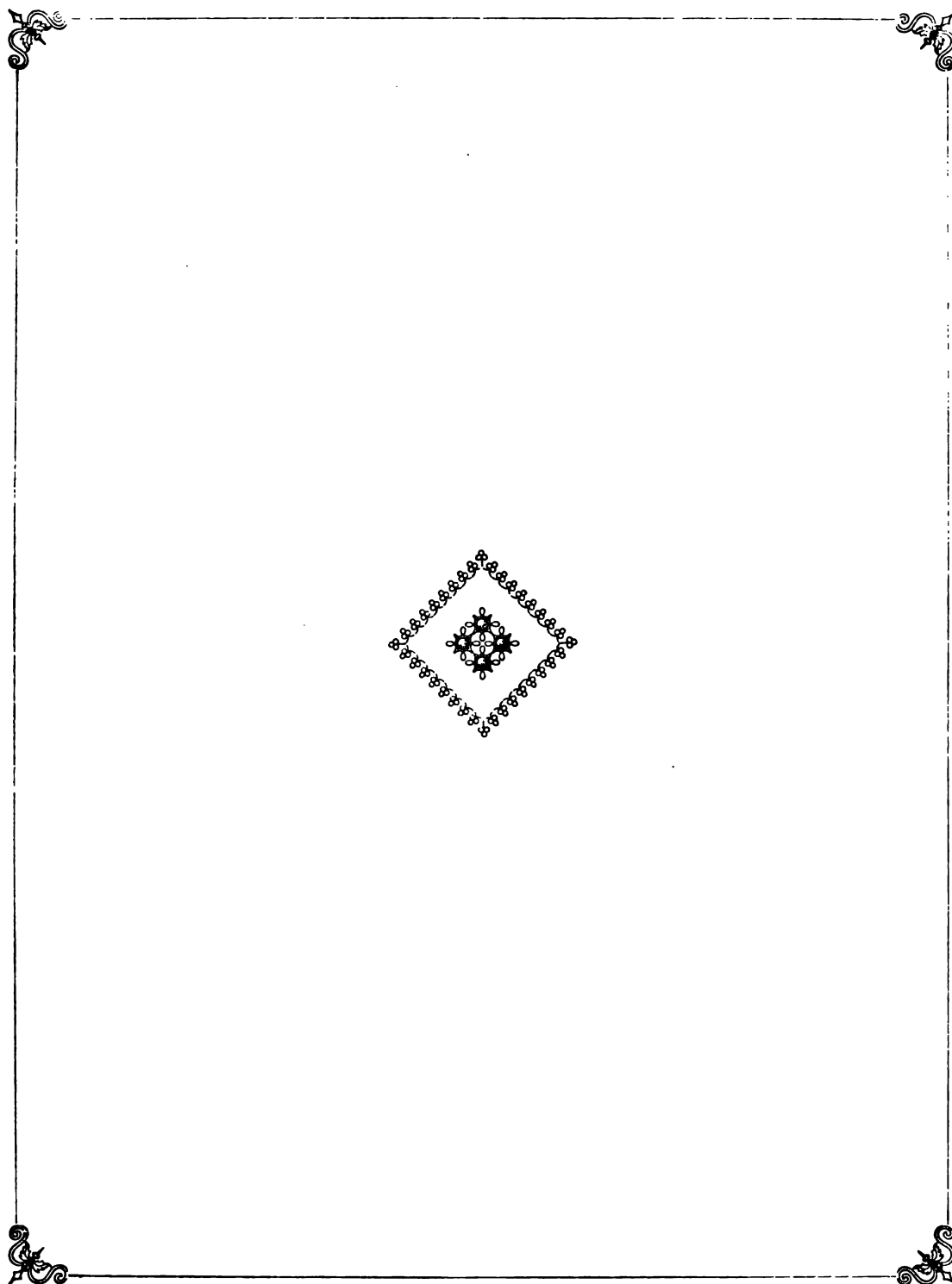
LONDON:
PRINTED BY SMITH, ELDER AND CO.,
LITTLE GREEN ARMOUR COURT, OLD BAILEY, E.C.



To John Strangre Esq
Chigwell
with kind regards
from yrs truly
50 Porchester Terrace
19 April 1866

THE seed must die, before the corn appears,
Out of the ground, in blade and fruitful ears;
Low have those ears before the sickle lain,
Ere thou canst treasure up the golden grain;
The grain is crushed, before the bread is made;
And the bread broke, ere life to man conveyed—
Oh! be content to die, to be laid low,
And to be crushed, and to be broken so,
If thou upon God's table mayst be bread,
Life-giving food for souls an-hungerèd.

R. C. TRENCH.



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
St. Martin	5

WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

Wayside Flowers	89
The Three Churches	93
Hope and Fear	104
Requiem	108
What are the Angels like?	110
The Gloaming	116
Dreams of the Past	118
The World of Beauty	121
Thy Will be Done	125
Fairy Gifts	127
The Journey on Together	131
The Letters of the Dead	135
Little Things	138
The Student	143
A Town Vigil	148
Rebellees	154
My Books	159
Star-gazing	164
Red Prar's Cbe	169
The Launch of the "Duncan Dunbar"	174
A Seed was by the Storm Wind Blown	176

	PAGE
Old Legends	178
The Dying Painter	181
The Death-watch	185
A Glimpse of the Fairies	190
Folkestone Church	194
Moonlight	197
Our World	199
The Falling Star	202
My Soul was Darkened	204
Advent	210
The Soul when on the Verge of Her New Being	212
Jacobite Song	215
The Call of God	218
Be Patient	221
A Summer Noon	223
Love at First Sight	229
Summer Lightning	234
The Fountain of Rebellion	237
Dominus Regnabit	242
The Poet's Thanksgiving	249
To the Poet Moultrie	252
Angels	254
The Dear Old Time	257

TRANSLATIONS.

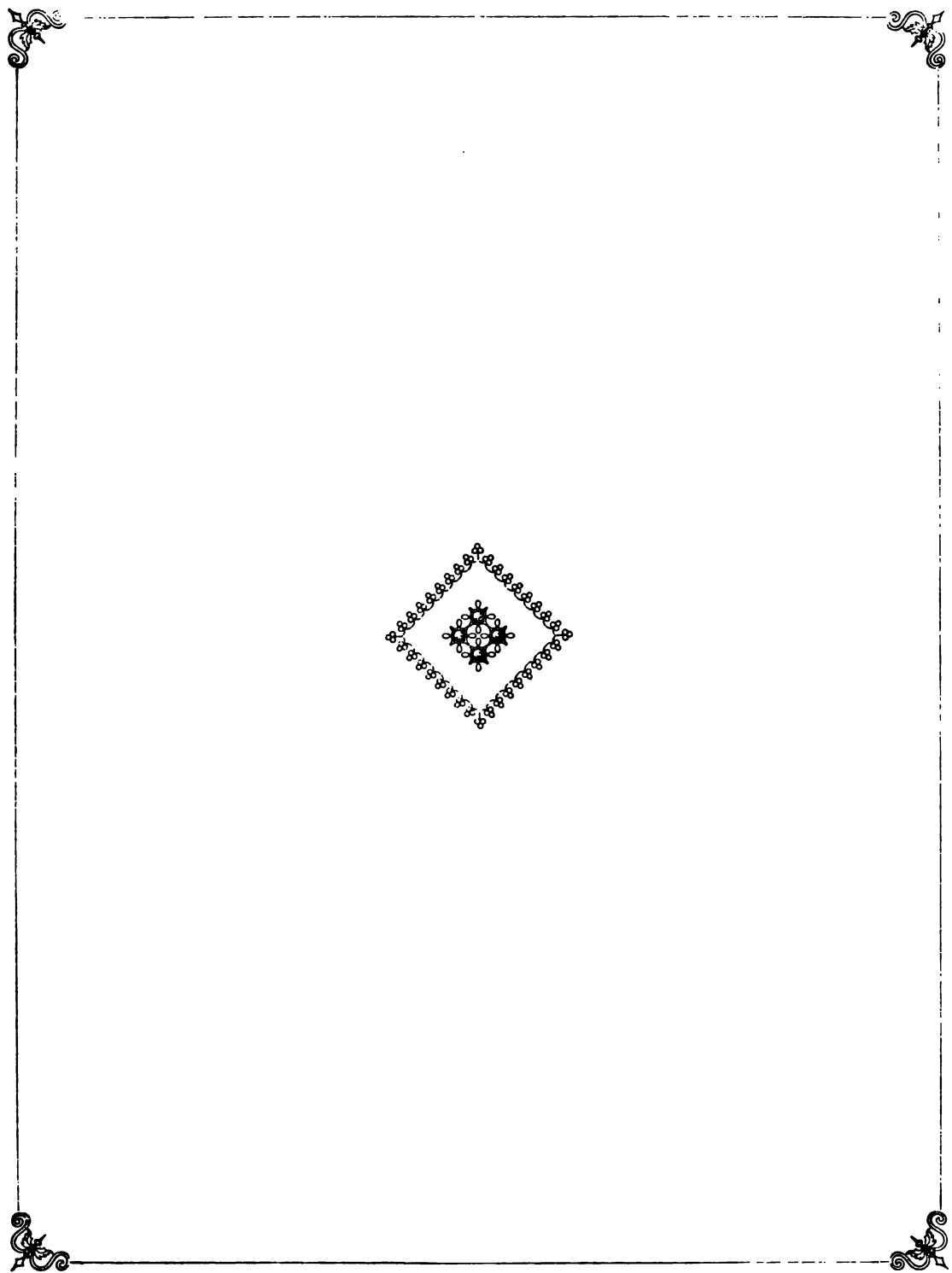
The Poet's Morning Hymn	263
The Voice of Peace	266
Eternity	271
Solitude	273
Song	276
The Angel	277
A Dream	278
The Minstrel	280
From Des Knaben Wunderhorn	282
The Birds of Passage	283
The Last Cloud	286
The Cottage Maiden	287

BIRDS AND FLOWERS.

	PAGE
Birds and Flowers	293
The Violet	295
The Owl	298
The Moss Rose	300
The Swallow	301
Exotics	304
The Dove	305
The Lily of the Valley	307
The Swan	308
Wild Flowers	309
The Falcon	312
The Robin Tree	313

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

Ex Voto	317
Written in an old Family Bible	320
On Reading the Works of Hartley Coleridge	323
To My Mother	326
A Dirge	328
Old Hildebrand	331
On the Death of General Palator	335
The Spirit's Call	337
An Episode of Moscow	339
A Song of Flowers	341
Evening	343
The Wild Hyacinth	344
A Sister's Heart	346
I Brought thee Flowers	348
Stanzas	350
On Hearing of the Fate of Sir John Franklin	352
The White Lily	355
The Legend of the Fairies' Elm	357



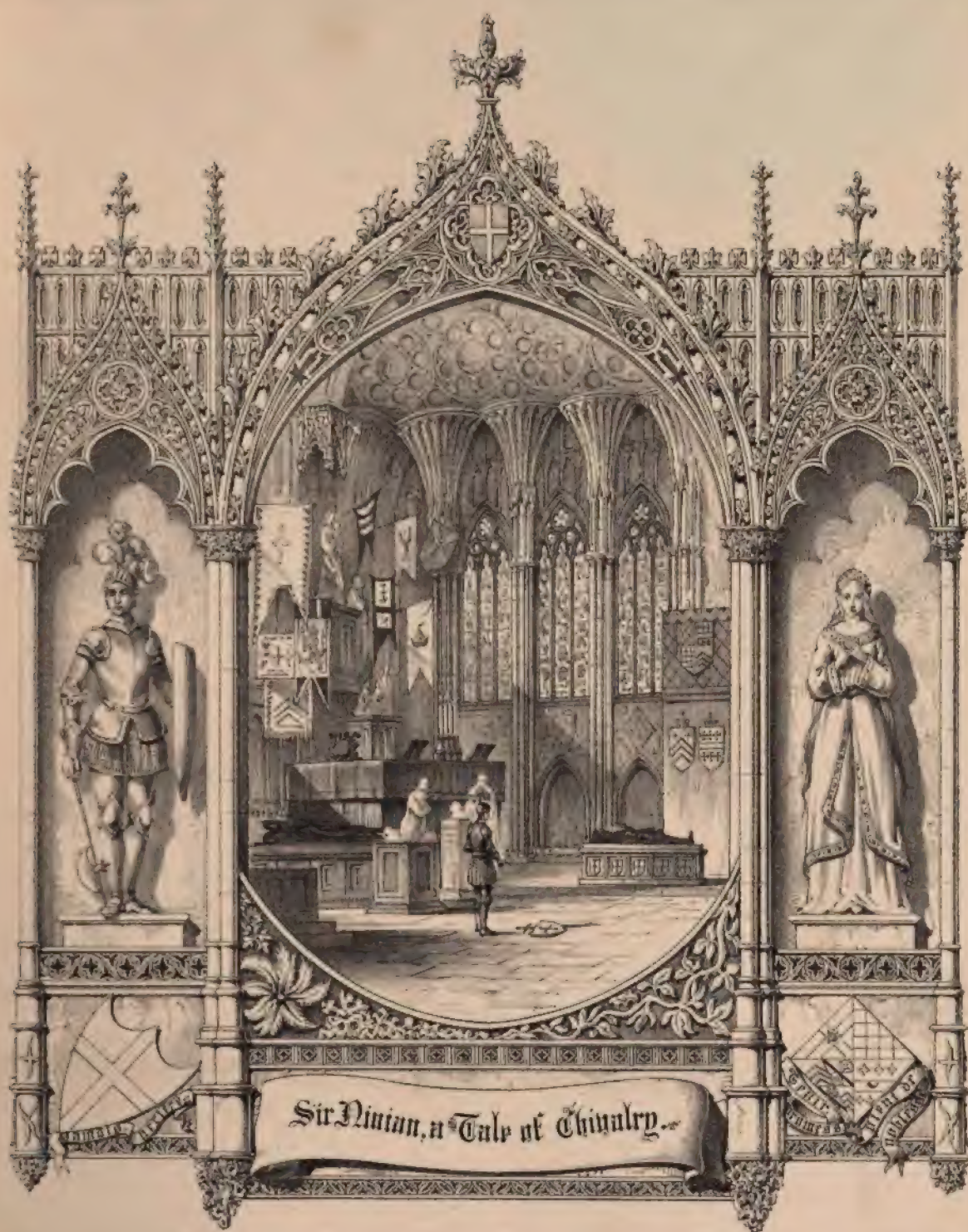
CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Sir Pinian	5

WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

Wayside Flowers	89
The Three Churches	93
Hope and Fear	104
Requiem	108
What are the Angels like?	110
The Gloaming	116
Dreams of the Past	118
The World of Beauty	121
Thy Will be Done	125
Fairy Gifts	127
The Journey on Together	131
The Letters of the Dead	135
Little Things	138
The Student	143
A Town Vigil	148
Rebeller	154
My Books	159
Star-gazing	164
New Year's Eve	169
The Launch of the "Duncan Dundar"	174
A Seed was by the Storm Wind Blown	176

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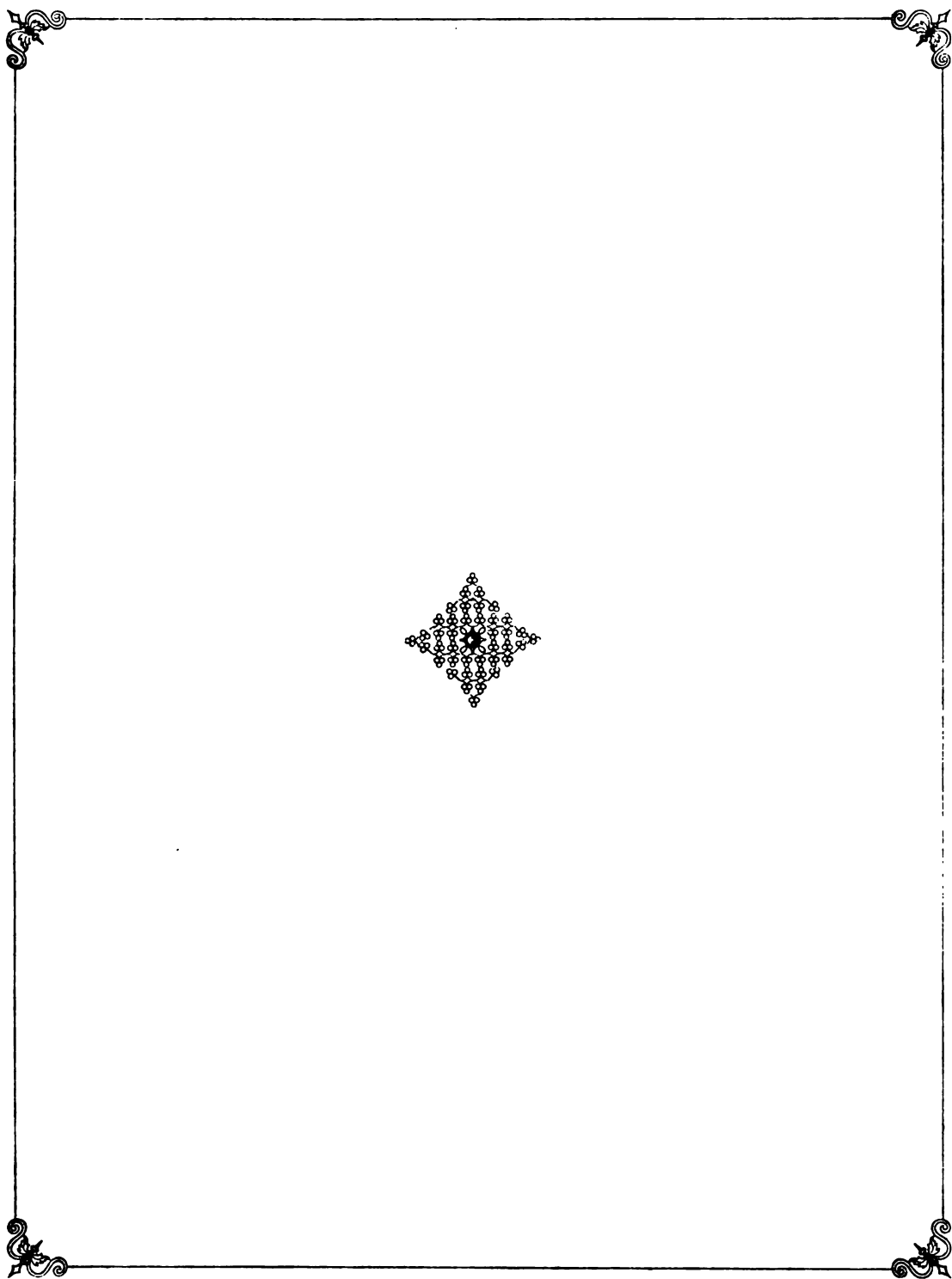
10



SIR NINIAN,

A Tale of Chivalry.

IN FOUR CANTOS.







To Kate.

THE pleasant task is o'er, the gentle dream
That lulled my fancy through the summer hours,
Like the soft breathings of a limpid stream *
In forests gay with flowers.

Yet on my harp one note is lingering still,
Shedding melodious accents, low and sweet;
The chords, that to my touch responsive thrill,
One cherished name repeat.

'Tis thine, my Sister! from whose changeless love
All thoughts unkind, all selfish aims depart,—
My comforter and friend,—the household Dove
That soothes my wayward heart!



When first my wings I spread in weak essay,
Half pleased, half startled at the sounds I woke,
Thy smile approving, o'er each timid lay,
Like fostering sunshine broke.

In darker hours, when from impending woes
My spirit shrank, to murmur and repine,
The calm endurance, in thy breast that rose,
Brought hope and strength to mine.

When I retrace, in contemplative mood,
Days of past sorrow, scenes of former glee,
All that is pure and lofty, kind and good,
Brings my thoughts back to thee.

I see thee laid on restless couch of pain,
Bearing long sleepless nights, and weary days,
With patient smiles, that ease and comfort feign,
Meeting our anxious gaze.

Oh! could I but the hues of health recall
To thy pale cheek, and make thy brow serene!
Oh! could I give thee back one tithe of all
That thou to me hast been!

To Kate.

5

Not mine the power to nerve thy drooping form,
And bid thee move again in health and glee;
Yet still Affection's prayer, sincere and warm,
I breathe to Heaven for thee!

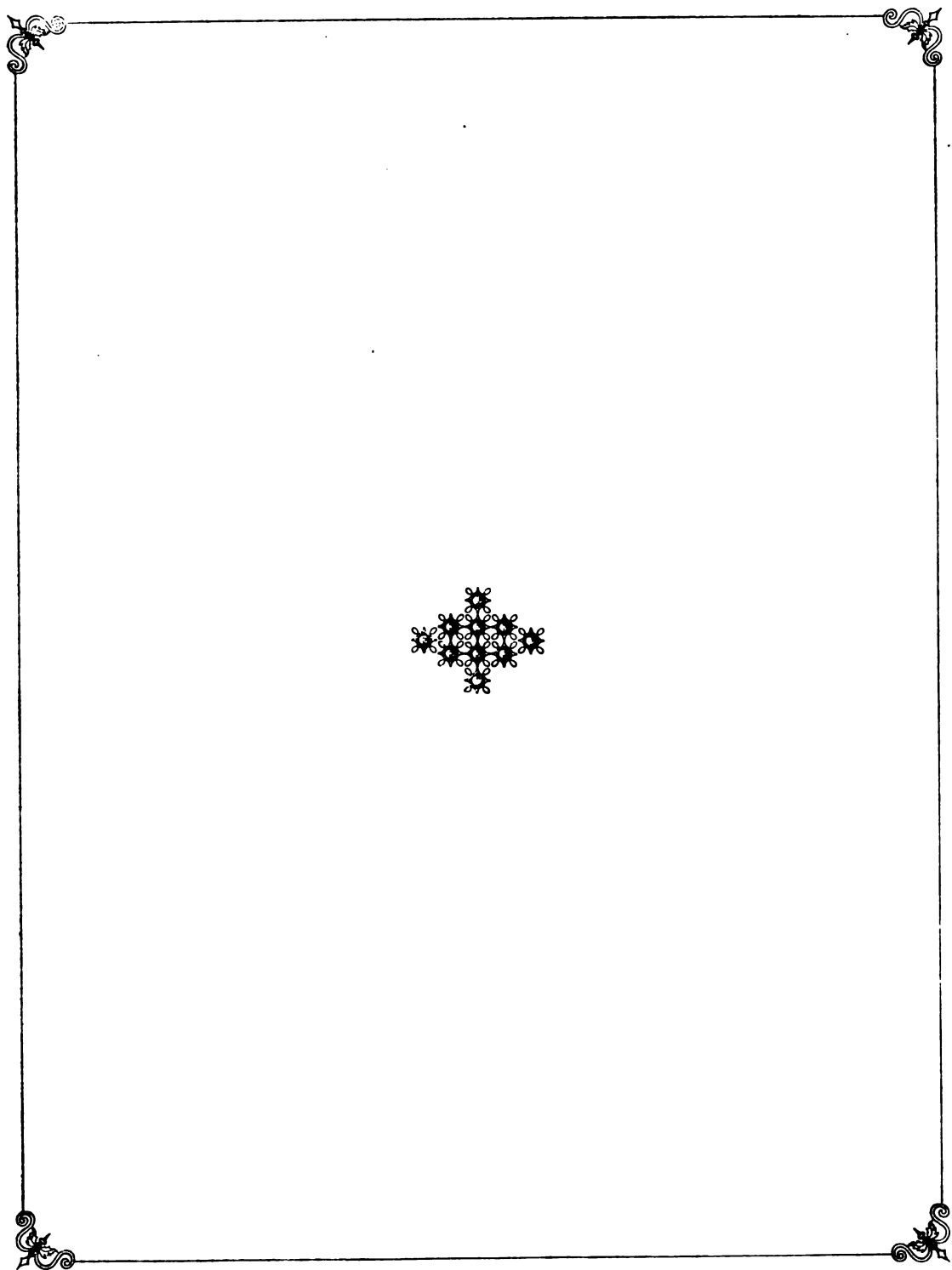
In olden times, when Knights went forth to war,
And held long vigils in the minsters quaint,
On pennon fair or blazoned shield they bore
Emblem or name of Saint.

And I, going forth to tread an unknown land,
Kind thoughts and wishes for my verse to claim,
On the first page inscribe, with willing hand,
Thy dear and gentle name:

Assured that none of all who know and prize
Thy warm and loving heart, thy goodness see,
With censures harsh and stern will criticize
The gift I offer thee!

30th September, 1854.





Sir Finian.

CANTO I.

THERE is an hour of lonely rapture, fraught
With many a pleasing hope and hallowed thought ;
'Tis not when Morning from the rosy East
Smiles a glad welcome on the green earth's breast,
And with her thousand voices calls again
Man to his heritage of care and pain ;
'Tis not when, dazzled by the noontide ray,
The pilgrim wanders from the dusty way,
To seek repose in some cool, shady nook,
Where the tall trees arch o'er the rippling brook ;
'Tis not when, glittering in the skies afar,
With placid ray shines forth Eve's pensive star,

And, from their toil released, the weary come
To rest once more within a quiet home ;
But when a broader, deeper shadow falls
On the proud waving woods and ancient halls ;
Hushed are the household voices, quenched the light,
And Earth in silence greets the solemn Night ;
No sound is heard, save from the distant tower
The bells proclaim the midnight's "witching hour,"
And sleep and happy dreams, a fairy train,
Have soothed to sweet repose each drowsy brain ;
Oh ! *then*, the Sage enraptured loves to pore
On all the treasures of his antique lore,
And, with unwearied eye, fresh converse hold
With the great seers and master minds of old,
Finding, in each bold scheme and mystic lay,
A wondrous charm he vainly sought by day.
Then Thought, set free from all the feverish strife,
The thousand petty cares of daily life,—
Back on the past now turns a mournful eye,
Sighs o'er each blighted hope, each broken tie ;
Or towards the future soars on rapid wing,
And paints the happier hours that Time may bring ;
Till, half forgetful of the heavy chain
That binds us to a world of sin and pain,
From land to land we rove, o'er mount and sea,
Tread brighter worlds, and dream that we are free !
Almost we seem a seraph's joy to share,
And the rapt heart o'erflows in silent prayer ;

Like the frail plant we pass unheeding by,
When Flora's graceful favourites are nigh;
No matchless beauty is its radiant dower,
No perfume woos us to the simple flower;
But when, o'er mountain top and shady dale,
Slowly descends gray Evening's sober veil,
Alone to the bright stars its leaves lie bare,
And waft rich odours on the slumbering air!

The moon shines fair on lake and forest bower,
And sloping dell, where white-walled hamlets stand,
And on each buttress of yon lonely tower
That grimly frowns above the pleasant land.
No lordly pennon waves in martial pride
From the old keep, whence light and joy are fled,
No bearded sentries, on the ramparts wide,
Pass, with their burnished arms and clanging tread.
There broods a deep and melancholy gloom
O'er those dark walls—a silence of the tomb!
Once, steeds were crowding round the ample gate,
Where lords and vassals met in princely state,
The minstrels tuned their harps, when loud within
Was heard the sprightly jest, the mirthful din;
And maids and matrons, from the lattice high,
Gazed forth, with throbbing heart and tearful eye;
While lances gleamed, and bugles wildly rung,
And streaming banners on the winds were flung.

Now, all are gone!—the rank grass waves around,
With moss and lichens gray the walls are crowned,
And heavily the lengthened shadows fall
On the deserted court and silent hall!

There is no light within the Gothic pile
Save the bright lamp that gleams at Mary's shrine,
Shedding a fitful ray on arch and aisle,
And slender shaft where clustering roses twine.
Well hath the sculptor's gifted hand portrayed
The lovely form of Judah's Royal Maid—
Beauty and innocence, in that sweet face,
Blend with a gentle, yet unearthly grace,
So pure, so holy, ye might almost deem
'Twas the creation of some blessed dream,
A Saint, an Angel from the blissful shore
Where earthly toil and tumult vex no more,
Save that, within those mild and pensive eyes
A shade of thought, of human sadness lies,
A world of silent grief, of tearful love,
A cloud that never dims the flowers above.
It was as if the Mother's soul had caught,
In that calm hour, a dim, prophetic thought,
A vision of the judgment and the doom,
The Crown of Thorns, the Cross, the silent Tomb,
And, feeling all the graces to her given,
Honoured on earth, and loved and blessed by Heaven,

The Virgin trembled at the pathway dread,
The long, dark, weary years before her spread;
The weak frame shrank, the spirit inly wept
O'er woes that still within the future slept.
Pale in her marble arms the fair Child lay,
But not like earthly childhood, wild and gay,
For, from the depths of those large, earnest eyes,
Looked forth the soul of sinless Paradise —
A glance so high, so bright, the world ne'er saw;
It hushed the gazer's heart in silent awe,
And made him bow the knee in reverence there,
While from his lip arose the fervent prayer.

Within the Chapel, in their armour, lay
The noble Barons who had passed away;
Each imaged in his long and dreamless rest,
With glittering sword, high plume, and haughty crest.
While on the walls above hung spear and shield,
Tokens of many a dark and bloody field,
And the torn banners shed a crimson glow
On the pale marble forms reclined below!
A noble race they were! In danger's field
Ever the first to conquer, or to die;
No treason ever stained their blazoned shield,
Or bowed in shame the crest they bore so high;

For Fame they toiled through many a weary year,
Upheld with stalwart arm their Monarch's crown;
They won the rich rewards that men hold dear,
Proud names were theirs, and rank, and high renown.
Now what remains?—A few gray, crumbling towers,
Round which the wanton ivy creeps at will;
Still the old walls are gay with blushing flowers—
The hands that tended them are cold and chill!
Here for a time the musing bard may stray,
Dreaming of wild romance and legend old,
And, as he views the marks of slow decay,
Sigh that the light is quenched—the warm heart cold.
But the proud hearts, the glory, and the grace,
The high, impassioned thought, the mystic lore,
All these have passed away and left no trace,
And the old halls give back their name no more!
Alas for Earth! her radiant visions fly,
Her hopes are crushed, her choicest gifts decay,
Swift as the airy cloud that marks the sky,
Or the frail bud that withers in a day!

Alone and silent, by the holy shrine
Stands the last scion of that noble line;
A youthful Knight, whose old heroic name,
By bards immortalized, is dear to Fame,
Musing, with pallid cheek and eye of fire
By the gray tomb raised to his Warrior Sire.

Ere yet the infant's rosy lips could frame
The cherished accents of a Father's name,
The gallant Lord rode forth in martial garb,
With plume, and burnished lance, and fiery barb;
And with him went a tried and trusty band,
All men of dauntless heart and skilful hand,
Eager, like him, in Holy Land to quell
The fury of the godless Infidel.

When years had passed, of all that brilliant clan
But one returned,—an old, grey-headed man;
With trembling hand, from Jordan's sacred shore,
His master's heart the faithful henchman bore,
To rest within the old and hallowed place
Where lay the founders of his lordly race.

He told how when the fight raged o'er the plain,
And shouts were heard, and arrows fell like rain,
Pierced by a Paynim shaft, the good Knight fell,
On the red ground where he had fought so well.
He told how, one by one, their band decayed,
By pining sickness thinned, or foeman's blade,
Till he alone remained, the turf to spread
Above his master's loved and honoured head,
And, o'er the desert sands and ocean wild,
Bear his last blessing to his sportive child.

It was, I ween, a lovely sight to see
The fair boy standing at his mother's knee,
Gazing, with Childhood's sweet and artless grace,
On the calm beauty of her pensive face.
He loved to hear her tell of chieftains bold,
Of mighty deeds wrought by their sires of old,
Of dismal caves where dark enchanters dwell,
And halls of gramarye, and wizard's spell;
Or she would sing some old, heroic lay
Of knights renowned in arms, and ladies gay,
And magic woods where none might wander free,
For spirits lurked beneath the greenwood tree.
But feebler grew her voice from day to day,
And on her cheek a marble whiteness lay;
Oft would she gaze on the blue skies above,
And, with the fervour of a mother's love,
Pray for the child she left to wander on
Through the cold world, unguided and alone.

And, when the white-robed angels for her came,
And her soul parted from its mortal frame,
Heedless of the chill air and deep'ning gloom,
The orphan sat within her silent room,
Waiting, in mingled hope, and fear, and pain,
To see the Lady wake and smile again.
They laid her by the haughty warrior's side,
And in the Gothic chapel, large and wide,

A monument of spotless stone they raised
To her, whose lofty virtues all men praised.
Pious she was, and gentle, and the poor
Ne'er turned unanswered from the castle door;
But there the wandering palmer often came,
And blessed with faltering tongue the noble dame.
They bade the orphan dry each starting tear,
Strove with kind words his drooping soul to cheer;
They said,—"She wanders now a spirit blest,
Through the bright paths of Heaven's eternal rest;
And when this life and all its griefs are o'er,
Thy spirit, too, on angel wings may soar,
To meet and dwell with hers on that immortal shore." }
'Tis useless all!—With feeble steps and slow,
He treads the spacious rooms so lonely now!
The cheerful hearth, the pictures on the wall,
The drooping flowers, his mother's form recall.
Still, as when last it wooed her busy hands,
Her broidery frame beside the casement stands,
Her silver lute is hushed, and sadly there
His tearful eye rests on her vacant chair!

In hopeless grief and loneliness of soul,
Forth to the solemn woods the mourner stole;
Thick, murky clouds obscured the face of Heaven,
Across his path the withered leaves were driven,

And the wild Autumn wind, with sudden moan,
Rushed through the forest like a parting groan.
Thenceforth, it was his only joy to rove
Through each lone path of the sequestered grove,
To mark the snowdrop, dressed in virgin white,
Come forth to greet the sun's returning light;
While modest flowers, in dewy turf enshrined,
With fragrant breath perfumed the drowsy wind;
And stately tree and lowliest hedge were seen
Clad in a veil of softest, tenderest green;
And the wild birds that passed on rapid wing
Proclaimed the advent of the genial Spring.
When, with all gorgeous hues the earth was spread,
And thick the leaves were clustering overhead,
He wandered by the river's shady side,
And heard the murmur of the rippling tide,
While the pale lily in her virgin rest
Decked with her starry cup the water's breast.
O'er fertile meads when waved the golden grain,
And Peace and Plenty smiled in Autumn's train,
He watched each varied hue the woods unfold,
Rich crimson, sober brown, and deepening gold;
And, sadder still, beheld the dead leaves fall,

Like human pleasures, from the weeping trees,
Now piled in heaps against the mouldering wall,

Now whirled aloft, the sport of every breeze;
Gray Winter brought his ice and drifting snow,
And laid his cold hand on each leafless bough;

Yet, with the hoar frost wreathed, each slender stem
Lifted on high a sparkling diadem,
Making the avenues and thickets seem
Like the bright palace of some fairy dream.
Oh! say not hours like these were better spent
O'er ponderous tomes, in halls of learning pent.
They, who in early youth have learnt to prize
Each changeful tint that brightens o'er the skies,
Have seen the face of Nature smooth and fair,
Trod her green lanes, and breathed her mountain air,
Receive but seldom in their nobler mind
The wild delusions that enslave mankind.
To them, each blade of grass, each dewy sod,
Each lowly herb, is eloquent of God;
They hear His voice upon the rocky strand,
And in each leaf behold their Maker's hand!

The years roll'd swiftly by, and with them brought
Youth, and its boundless hopes, its eager thought;
And dim, poetic fancies, strangely blent
 With glimpse of prancing steed and echoing horn,
Across his wayward spirit came and went,
 Like transient shadows o'er the waving corn.
And Love—with all its hopes, its wild unrest,
Its thousand fears—woke in the young man's breast;
When, like a sunbeam o'er his pathway, fell
The radiant smile of dark-eyed Isabel.

He worshipped her, but like some glorious star,
That glides in beauty from the heavens afar;
Nor breathed to mortal ear the love enshrined
In his full heart, round every thought entwined.
Broad, fertile lands, with many a lordly tower,
And rustic hamlet, were the maiden's dower.
Her sire, whose brows the massive helm had worn,
Full oft in deadly strife his part had borne;
And he had vowed that none should ever claim
His daughter's hand, unless in lists of fame
He had received, from one renowned in fight,
The golden spurs which mark the belted knight,
And, to the feats of each ancestral lord,
Added the trophies of his own good sword.
Therefore, Sir Ninian, with the morning's ray,
Will leave his father's mansion worn and gray;
Burning to win, on many a distant shore,
Fame such as errant knight ne'er won before!
And dreams he thus, while 'neath his careless tread
Are laid, in stern repose, the mighty dead?
Each sound that through the long aisles floateth by,
Seems the faint echo of a phantom's sigh,
A voice to bid the fiery heart beware
Of budding hopes that end in dark despair.
Alas! 'tis not till from the brow of youth
The roses fall, and wither at our side,
We listen to the sober voice of Truth,
And take grave Wisdom for our future guide.

Baffled in frequent strife, and oft deceived
By the cold world we loved and served in vain,
We sigh o'er falsehoods that we once believed,
And grow familiar with Grief's dismal train!

He turns, impatient in the Orient skies
To see the earliest beam of morning rise.
Why starts he?—Lo! the silvery moonbeams fall
On sculptured saints that gleam along the wall;
And one soft ray of quivering light is thrown
On the pale form, carved on the funeral stone.
And thoughts and feelings that long buried lay
Rush o'er his heart with unresisted sway;
By that dear mother's side once more he stands,
Feels the warm pressure of her jewelled hands,
And hears the voice that oft, at close of day,
Soothed his light slumbers with a plaintive lay.
Yes! he may prosper in his high career,
May win bright honours in a distant land;
And friendship may applaud, and love may cheer
The hero's peaceful hours with gentle hand;
Yet will he find ere long how false and vain
Are all the transient joys of Glory born;
For sorrow dwells in Pleasure's fair domain,
And the proud laurel hides the poisoned thorn!

Soon will he mourn o'er darling visions flown,
And oft, with heavy heart, 'mid scenes of mirth,
Will pine for one kind look, one gentle tone
From lips that evermore are hushed on earth.
Sweet as the strains from angel lyres that flow,
Pure as the accents breathed in realms above—
Life has no priceless treasure to bestow,
So true, so changeless, as a Mother's love!

'Twas said in olden time, by one who wept
O'er the loved form that Time might ne'er restore,
When in the silent grave the pale corpse slept,
Which Grief might move, and Joy might cheer no
more;—

'Twas said, though from this troubled earthly scene
A friend depart, to join the voiceless dead,
His spirit lingers still, unheard, unseen,
Amid the paths where he was wont to tread.
Then, by Life's misty veil no longer scaled,
O'er boundless worlds ranges that glorious eye,
And to its keen and searching glance revealed
The inmost secrets of our being lie.
When with temptations sore the heart is tried,
And the clear voice within forbids the deed,
The friendly spirit ever at our side,
Prompts the soft warning we too rarely heed.

It watches by the restless couch of pain,
 Notes the quick, fevered throb, the sudden start;
 With blessed hopes it calms the tortured brain,
 And whispers comfort to the breaking heart.
 And, for the dread and unknown Spirit-land,
 When trembling souls quit this familiar scene,
 The Guardian Angel waits, with gentle hand,
 To guide its loved ones to their home serene!

Sir Ninian rose. His frank and noble brow
 Wore but the trace of high and solemn thought;
 He paced the shadowy aisle with footsteps slow,
 Musing on all the hopes that legend taught.
 It told how love survives the narrow tomb;
 How, when the strife is o'er, the haven won,
 Through the dark paths of danger and of gloom,
 The Mother still may watch and guide the Son!

CANTO II.

THE stars are waning on the brow of Night,
And rosy tints gleam in the Eastern sky;
Soon, o'er the mountain peaks the Lord of Light
Rises, in more than regal majesty.
At his approach the dusky shadows fly,
And, like a monarch that hath no compeer,
He mounts yon azure dome so vast and high,
Bearing Life, Health, and Hope, to nations slumbering here !

Thus Knowledge first dawns on the infant mind,
And Science spreads her rich and varied store ;
Like shapeless morning mists, we leave behind
The legendary tales of fairy lore,
And eager haste new marvels to explore.
But Grief is Wisdom's handmaid ; she hath taught
Sadness to lurk in eyes that smiled before ;
Hushed is the child's free laugh, for years have brought
Youth's burning, restless dream, and Man's aspiring thought !

Then up Ambition's rugged steep we climb,
Brave Envy's venom'd speech, and Hate's dark frown;
Still hasting onward towards the goal sublime,
The glittering bubble that we call Renown!
Alas! we see not, o'er our pathway strewn
The faded flowers that deck'd our early way,
Youth's bright romance is o'er, its freshness flown,
And vanished 'neath the sun's too ardent ray
The pearly drops of dew that on our childhood lay!

The Knight went forth alone. No words to cheer
Fell like sweet music on his parting ear;
For none were left, from yonder hoary tower,
To track his course from field and forest bower,
To watch unwearied, till, across the plain
His gallant steed should bear him home again;
And, in the morn's bright hour, and twilight dim,
And the long sleepless night, to pray for him.
Yet, in his early childhood, he had made
Friends of the rippling brook, the winding glade,
The quiet dell, where flowers of every hue,
And freshest moss, in sylvan beauty grew,
The softly-temper'd light that quivering play'd
On the gnarled columns of each long arcade;
And he had loved the many-coloured things
That through the greenwood flit on rapid wings,
Filling the air with music. From the trees
That rustling bent to Summer's changeful breeze;

From the gray willows and the osiers dank
That cast broad shadows on the river's bank ;
From mount, and glen, and field, where through the day
Rang the glad laughter of the child at play ;
And from each lattice pane, each ivied wall,
Each mouldering rampart of the desert hall,
Soft as the whisper of a woodland fay,
A murmuring voice arose, and bade him stay.
And still he lingered. Oh ! who lingers not,
And sighs to leave the dear, familiar spot,
Where Life's sweet spring hath passed, untouched by care,
Where first the young heart thrilled with faith and prayer?
Fortune may smile, and Hope may be our guide,
Painting with rainbow tints the path untried ;
And rich as coronals of summer leaves
Are the fond dreams the gay Enchantress weaves !
But Memory still a wistful look doth cast
On the pale phantoms of the shadowy past,
Recalling scenes of love and pleasure fled,
And forms that now are numbered with the dead ;
While in our hearts a dim, prophetic tone
Warns us our best and brightest days are gone,
And tells of fruitless toils, and frequent strife,
And cares that darkly shade the noon of life,
Where, if we reach the goal, 'tis but to find
No joys so pure as those we left behind !

A burst of sudden music, high and clear,
Fell in rich cadence on Sir Ninian's ear,
And, from the green shade of the copse hard by,
A lark rose soaring towards the free blue sky ;
Higher it went, and higher, till its flight
Was lost amid the blaze of glorious light ;
Yet, from the field of Æther's blue domain,
All joyous came that soft and echoing strain,
Deep, thrilling, sweet, and strangely eloquent,
Like words of love and kindly greeting, sent
By some bright form of more than mortal birth,
To cheer the frail and doubting child of earth.
Entranced he listened — on his lip the while
There played a sweet yet melancholy smile.
Once more he gazed — then gently shook the rein,
And hastened towards the mountains' distant chain.
Rugged and wild the barren heights arose,
Belted with gloomy pines, and crowned with snows ;
There, from the centre of the darksome cave
Gushed the swift torrent's long-imprisoned wave,
And granite rocks were there, with moss o'ergrown,
The giant portals of the World unknown !

“ Pleasant it is, to spend the sultry hours
In the cool shadow of the rowan-tree,
While from the petals of the glowing flowers
Comes the low murmur of the honey-bee ;

To watch the stream, that from some hidden urn,
Sends its pure waters through the forest lone,
Where the shy fawn lurks 'neath the spreading fern,
And violets blossom, and the tall reeds moan.
When the wind stirs the soft leaves overhead,
On the clear surface of the azure sky,
Like some enchanted bark with sails outspread,
The snowy, lustrous clouds go sailing by;
And from the grassy dingle where she dwells,
Float the sweet murmurs of the cushat dove;
Oh! sweeter, lovelier far are Fancy's spells,
Bright reveries of Poesy and Love!"
Thus spake the Knight, as, lighting from his steed,
Upon a grassy mound he dreaming lay,
'Mid lichens bright, and many a fragrant weed,
And sweet wild flower that blossomed by the way.
The silver birch, the graceful linden tree,
And quivering aspen, o'er the shady lane,
Entwined their drooping branches lovingly,
Making a broad and vaulted canopy,
Like the dim cloisters of a time-worn fane.
Meet home it were, for saintly Anchorite,
Whose hours to prayer and holy thought were given,
And, through the stillness of the summer night,
Rose like sweet incense to the gates of Heaven.
The great Creator's wisdom might he trace
In the recesses of the forest glade;
And from the "tablets of his heart" efface
Each stain the false and fleeting world had made.

The song of birds, the laughter of the stream,
All woodland voices, round his cell should rise,
Till Life became a pure and sinless dream,
And Earth was clothed in hues of Paradise.
The spell is broken!—On the whispering gale
Rises a mournful sound, a sudden wail
Of bitterest anguish—'neath the rowan-tree
She stands, the child of want and misery—
A pale and blighted form. What lines of woe
Are traced on those wan cheeks, that haggard brow,
The lips that smile no more, and eyes that glare
With the fixed stony look of wild despair!
Ah! once, perchance, a Mother fondly hung
On the soft accents of her lisping tongue;
Watched by the maiden's couch, and inly blessed
The placid slumbers of that guileless breast;
Or twined with loving hand a chaplet fair
In the long tresses of her golden hair,
And joyed to see her move, with eye serene,
Through the gay pastimes of the village-green.
Now, all untended, in her helpless age,
She wanders on her dreary pilgrimage,
The world's cold looks to meet, its scorn to brave,
And from the stranger's hand a pittance crave!
Sir Ninian rose;—the tale of grief and pain
To that warm heart was never breathed in vain;
The meanest thing, amid the forest dim,
That breathed the breath of life, was dear to him,

And long remembered in his father's land
Were the kind charities of that young hand.
Not alms alone he gave, the gentle Knight !
Soft words of pity from his pure heart flowed,—
Blossoms of love and sympathy, which light
Too seldom on the poor man's toilsome road.
As, on the parched stem of some drooping flower,
Falls the mild freshness of the vernal shower,
So, o'er the suppliant's worn and weary soul,
Like healing balm, those words of kindness stole.
Old thoughts, old feelings in her bosom rise,
And tears are gushing from those hard, stern eyes ;
While holy words—that many a year, I ween,
To those pale, quivering lips had strangers been—
In floods of grateful rapture burst, and shed
A solemn blessing on the young man's head.
They parted—one, through poverty and gloom,
To seek the haven of the quiet tomb ;
And one, to ponder long, with thoughtful brow,
On the deep mystery of human woe,
The jarring chord that mars the song of mirth,
The cloud that dims the loveliest scenes of earth !

Onward he rode, and twilight's dewy hour
Still found him 'neath the forest's leafy bower ;
Fantastic shapes upon the turf were cast,
Mysterious voices swelled the rising blast ;

Their giant stems the circling trees upreared,
Like hooded monks, and spectres gaunt and weird,
On every side they thronged, a ghastly train
Thick as the phantoms of a haunted brain—
And fear was on his soul. Oh! scorn him not!

Each hall and hamlet had its legend quaint,
Of mighty deeds by power of magic wrought,
Of wizard grim, pale nun, or martyred saint.
The proudest chieftain of an ancient line,

The stoutest heart that beat beneath the mail,
Then bowed in lowly reverence at the shrine,

And gave full credence to each wondrous tale.
Oh! pure and child-like Faith! oh! Fairy lore!
In this dark world ye have your place no more;
With cold and selfish hand, we drive away
The graceful fables of the elder day,
The lovely creed that peoples earth and air
With shapes of boundless might and beauty rare,
Gives to the limpid rill a deeper tone,
And lends the world a lustre not its own!

A human voice arose, a ray of light
Streamed o'er the pathway of the wildered Knight;
With eager hand he bent the boughs aside,
Before him rose a cavern large and wide;

A mass of ivy round the entrance clung,
And sportively its pendent tresses flung
O'er the small silver lamp that from the broad arch hung.
Beneath it sate a grave and aged man,
With robe of sober brown and visage wan ;
Softly the light fell on the locks of grey
That clustered round his calm and stately head,
As, from a massive tome that near him lay,
In measured tone some mystic words he read.
Gladly Sir Ninian hailed that welcome sight,
His guardian Saint he blessed for timely aid,
And by the side of that pale Eremite
For a brief while his weary footsteps stayed.

How lovely art thou, Age ! when thy meek brow
And patient smile,
Speak but of kindly thought, and tender woe,
Unmixed with guile ;
When, with a steadfast eye, on scenes long past
Thou lookest back,
And Faith and Hope a glorious splendour cast
On life's dull track ;
Thy placid features wear a radiant gleam,
A heavenly dower.
Soft, calm, and soothing as the moon's pale beam
On ruined tower !

How fearful art thou, Age! when thy dark eye
And furrowed cheek,
The impress wear of guilt and misery,
Thoughts vain and weak;
When Conscience brings from many a mis-spent day
A threat'ning tone,
And o'er the dreaded future no bright ray
Of hope is thrown!

In filial love and reverence meet
The Warrior sat at the Sage's feet,
And poured forth the yearnings, that, long suppressed,
Like a hidden flame, burned in his breast;
He spake of the grief and the silent tears
That hung like a shroud o'er his earlier years;
Of the beauteous visions that glided by
When the fire of youth in his veins burned high,
And the love that, in his lone course afar,
Through weal and woe, was his guiding star.
No answering word the hermit made,
His head upon his breast was bowed,
As one who in his spirit prayed,
And knew nor love nor feeling proud.
But ever and anon there came
From his dark eye a sudden flame;
And the smile that on his lip was worn,
Was a smile of hate and bitterest scorn.

And all in the cave was still as death,
Save the chime of a distant waterfall,
And the ivy that rose with the night wind's breath,
Rustling against the outer wall;
Till, starting as though from dreams he woke,
In bitterness the old man spoke:

“Heart of Youth! still pressing ever
Up the mountain's barren side,
With a restless, vain endeavour,
Eye of fire, and lip of pride!
Thou askest Fame, with her glittering toy,
To bring thee Honour, and Love, and Joy;
To still the wishes, the undefined
And passionate yearnings that crowd thy mind?
I tell thee, the deer shall forsake the glen
For the rough and the busy haunts of men;
The stream that rushes through spray and foam,
Shall ascend once more to its mountain home;
The bird shall forget the forest bower
Where first he sang by his leafy nest;
Ere Fame, with her dreams of pomp and power,
Shall fill the void of one human breast!
Time was, my spirit sought, like thine,
Amid the good and great to shine;
But all in vain! There was laid on me
The withering curse of poverty.

Many, whose arm was less strong than mine,
Were borne aloft on the fickle tide,
While I, who came of no ancient line,
Like a noxious weed was cast aside.
From the thoughtless world and its vain desires
I turned to the lore of our ancient sires,
I communed with them in the nights alone,
Till their might and their wisdom became my own.
I stood erect 'neath the azure dome,
And questioned the stars of things to come;
And I wrung from the earth all the wealth that lies
In her deep heart, unknown to mortal eyes.
Be wise then, O Stranger! and rest with me,—
Thine shall the fruits of my learning be;
I will train thy heart, and teach thee to look
In the mystic leaves of Nature's book;
When the moon shines bright o'er the field and fell,
To the list'ning world will we breathe the spell;
The sprites that hover o'er sea and land
Shall bow to the might of our dread command;
From the hidden depths of the mermaid's cave
They shall bear thee the spoils of the crystal wave;
And the dusky mine at thy feet shall pour
Treasures unrecked of in days of yore.
Prouder and greater thy lot shall be
Than the heroes of far-famed Chivalry!
Theirs, at best, was an empty name,
A rugged life, and a barren Fame.

Thine — no bard, in his happiest hour,
When his soul was bursting with Poesy,
Ere imaged forth half the joy and power
That spirits unseen have reserved for thee!
Thou seekest the love of thy fellow race,
A deathless place by hearth and hall,
And the gentle smile of a young, fair face?
By the aid of Gold thou shalt win them all!"

And lo! at his voice the darkness pass'd
From the cold damp sides of the chamber vast;
No more on heaps of rugged stone
Was the tremulous light of the pale lamp thrown:
But it sank and faded before the blaze
That shot from the heart of each burning gem,
As they lit up the walls of that desert place,
Till all was glory and tender grace,
Like a Monarch's gorgeous diadem.
From the ruby — pride of the southern lands,
With an eye that speaks of the sultry noon;
To the strange, pale child of the desert sands,
That waxes and wanes with the changeful moon.
The emerald was there; and the coral twined
Its blushing columns in graceful sheaves,
And the snowy pearls, in its branches shrined,
Were like drops of dew in the rose's leaves.

And amid the sparkle of gems and gold,
Rose the giant form of the hermit old;
No more his brow wore the marks of care,
Of dreary vigil, and solemn prayer;
And his voice, no longer sweet and mild,
Burst like a sudden trumpet call,
Till the rocks repeated that promise wild —
“By the aid of Gold thou shalt win them all!”
As the early frost, in a sparkling shower
Melts from the cup of each drooping flower,
So the cloud of terror and mute dismay
From Sir Ninian’s spirit rolled away;
And he rose — no pensive and dreaming youth,
But a champion, girt for the cause of Truth!
Whose words were eloquent, not with art,
But the noble thoughts of a brave young heart.
“Mine be the power to soothe and bless
The soul of the needy, in his distress;
To maintain with honour and hardihood
All that is holy, and just, and good;
And when, unsullied by crime or fear,
In death shall close my proud career,
Mine be a grave where the young may tread,
Breathing sweet prayers for the spirit fled!
Yes! while life nerves this eager hand,
While the morning sun lights this fearless brow,
My steadfast heart, and my trusty brand,
Are vowed to a mightier Lord than thou!

By Him, who hath made each glorious stone
That thou, in thy madness, hast called thine own ;
By Him, who rules e'en in this lone grot,
Hence, I adjure thee — and tempt me not !”
A starless cloud o'erspread the sky,
And the voice of the thunder made reply ;
The lamp cast a lurid gleam about,
One moment quivered, and then went out ;
There came a sudden, stormy blast,
Through the crashing branches the tempest pass'd ;
The glittering treasures were swept away,
The vaulted cave, and the Wizard grey,
And all was deepest gloom ! —

—— Once more he stood
Neath the dark boughs of the majestic wood ;
But the long walks and avenues were bright,
Tinged with the moon's soft, mystic, dreamy light ;
Through the tall oaks, with greenest ivy twined,
Pealed the sweet anthem of the midnight wind ;
And at his feet a gurgling brooklet strayed,

A thread of silver, through the forest bowers,
Upon its wave, in slumbering beauty laid,
Gleamed the white chalice of the lotus flowers,
As the pure eyes of guardian spirits rest
On the calm surface of a sinless breast.
No sculptured shrine, no hallowed cross was there,
But the cool shade was full of love and prayer.

Sir Ninian.

37

In holiest awe the wanderer bowed his head,
Briefly his grateful orisons he said,
Then sank to rest, with many a pleasant dream,
Lulled by the music of that woodland stream.

CANTO III.

HAIL, blessed Spirit! daughter of the sky!
That shadowest earth with thine immortal wings,
And, by a magic touch, dost glorify
Alike exalted and familiar things!
Oh! what were life without thee? Thou dost cast
A tender halo round the spectral past,
Softening the bitter pangs, the burning tears,
The vain repinings of our bygone years;
Till Memory, the moonlight of the soul,
Blends the sharp lines in one delicious whole.
With smiling lip, obedient to thy sway,
Flock the bright pictures of the passing day;
And never painter caught the gorgeous hues,
The clear refulgent light, the charms untold,
Wherewith thy glowing pencil doth suffuse
The shadowy chart Time hath not yet unrolled.
Thou dwellest on the mountains, where of yore,
Armed for a righteous cause, the patriot stood,
Around him raged the stormy tide of war,
The snowy peaks were dyed with heroes' blood;—

Men, in their impious folly, strove to bind
A galling yoke alike on heart and brain;
Their boastful ensigns fluttered to the wind,
Their serried lances gleamed — 'twas all in vain!
And wherefore? To each heart thy sweet voice taught
Strength to resist, and courage to endure;
And from the clouds, with storm and darkness fraught,
The Sun of Freedom rose, serene and pure!
The light once kindled on those heights of fame,
Shall ne'er again be lost in embers wan;
To distant ages burns that quenchless flame,
Telling, 'mid toil and error, grief and shame,
How great, how noble is the soul of man!
Thou dwellest in the valley, where the church
Lifts towards the skies its venerable head;
The sunbeams kiss its grey and ivied porch,
And the green hillocks where the dead are laid;
While from the shadow of the stately tree
Peep many a latticed pane and mansion fair,
Like children, clustering round their Mother's knee,
Who lifts her folded hands to Heaven in prayer.
Thou lov'st the gloom of old baronial halls,
The lulling murmur of the Naiad's rill;
E'en in the busy city's crowded walls,
'Mid toil, and want, and crime, thou'rt lingering still.
None are so poor, so abject, but can find
Some green recess within their troubled mind;

It may be but a sigh for pleasures fled,
A tear, half checked by toil's imperious haste,
Or kindly thoughts that, like young violets, shed
A sweet perfume across Life's dreary waste.
Wherever Age with moistened eyelid turns
To the lost friendships of its earlier days,—
Wherever Youth with martial ardour burns,
And scans the future with a dauntless gaze—
Wherever Genius pours its burning soul
On History's page, or poet's deathless scroll,
Or makes the marble breathe,—the canvas glow
With thoughts and images of long ago;
Wherever Music, through the spacious nave
Pours her rich symphonies and choral strain,
With spirit-stirring bugle calls the brave—
Floats like a whisper o'er the starlit main,
And, finding in each breast an answering chord,
Now melts to tears, now lifts the soul to God!
The choicest trophies of impassioned Art,
The countless offerings at Nature's shrine;
E'en the deep mainsprings of the human heart,
Pride, Faith, Ambition, Sorrow, all are thine!
Earth has no lonely plain, no desert spot,
No barren, rugged steep where thou art not.
Thine is the foaming sea, the balmy air,
The festive hall, the solemn House of Prayer—
For Poesy is Love, and Love is everywhere!

Descend, sweet Spirit! from the radiant throne
Where, mid the circling spheres, thou rul'st alone,
My trembling accents frame, my song inspire,
And lend thy sweetness to a mortal lyre.
The hand is weak—but oh! the heart would fain
 Reveal its treasures to the eye of day,
Recounting, in a soft and joyous strain,
As sweet a dream as e'er through poet's brain
 Wove its light fancies in the month of May!

'Tis morn in the greenwood! Each tree and flower
Is steeped in a glittering, silvery shower,
At every breath, with a chiming sound,
The dewdrops fall on the mossy ground,
Making the paths of the forest shine
Like the cells of a glorious diamond mine.
Merrily flitting from spray to spray,
The wild birds carol their matins gay,
And wherever their swift wings have parted the leaves
Of the green shady canopy Nature weaves,
The sun looks in with an eye of love,
Gladd'ning the haunts of the cushat dove.
With joyous laughter, on every bough,
The forest fairies are waking now,—
Spirits that reign o'er the glens, and dwell
In the blossoming thorn and the hyacinth bell,
Peopling the woods with a countless throng,
Whose breath is perfume, whose soul is song!

From the mossy bank where her sisters grew,
The violet lifted her eyes of blue,
And the wild blush rose in the soft light smiled,
Like the dimpled cheek of a playful child;
But the lily, above her graceful head
The tremulous shade of her broad leaves spread,
Like an orphan who shrinks from the world's cold eye,
Bows her pale forehead, and prays to die.
With noiseless footsteps, in sprightly mood
Came the forest's statelier sisterhood,
Clad in their robes of sylvan green,

 Their long locks crowned with garlands bright,—
And they bent with eye and brow serene

 O'er the mossy couch of the slumbering Knight.
Upon the grass Sir Ninian lay,
His thoughts were wandering far away;
His soul, in the midnight's tranquil hours,
Had dwelt in a land of deathless flowers,
Where young leaves rustle, and bright founts gleam,
And glowing Fancy reigns supreme;
The fairy forms that hovered near
Seemed but the sprites of that radiant sphere;
And the blending voices, the low sweet hymn,
That floated away through the forest dim,

 In tones of love and fresh delight,
Was but the echo of a strain
That, like a mild, refreshing rain,
 Had steeped his soul the livelong night.

But soon a louder music broke
 From the knotted boughs of a hoary oak ;
 The birds for awhile in silence hung,
 And the small, fleet insects, like charmed things,
 Stood listening, poised on their airy wings,
 To the wild, sweet strain by the fairies sung :

“ A joyous life we fairies lead, beneath the greenwood tree,
 Weaving at times our sportive dance on many a grassy lea ;
 Or 'neath the spreading elm we pause, to bind the drooping
 flower,
 And o'er the infant blossoms pour a fertilizing shower.

We love to dream away the hours on beds of fragrant
 thyme,
 Or with the ivy's glossy leaves o'er storied ruins climb ;
 We hover round the gloomy caves where hidden waters
 gleam,
 And in the lily's marble cup float down the tranquil
 stream.

Should storm and darkness throw their shade across the
 summer sky,
 Within the closely-folded leaves, secure from harm, we lie ;
 When through the clouds the merry sun looks forth, we
 wake anew,
 Hold converse with the singing birds, and quaff the
 silver dew.

Child of the Earth! to whose rapt gaze kind spirits have
revealed
A thousand glorious mysteries, in the wood's deep heart
concealed,
Oh! rest within our forest home, nor seek to break the spell
That holds thee now, a welcome guest, within the Fairies' dell!

Thy couch shall be the velvet lawn, thy drink the limpid rill,
Thy messenger the swift-winged breeze that sports on moor
and hill,
And all the blushing flowers that waft sweet odours on thy
way,
Shall be thy fragrant horologe through the long, bright
summer day.

For thee the bee her task shall ply, for thee the lark shall
sing,
And buds and mosses from the ground in fresher beauty spring,
And lichens gray, that crust the roots of many an aged tree,
Shall whisper tales of olden times, of love and gramarye.

The turf a carpet smooth and green shall spread beneath
thy feet,
And sunbeams slanting through the boughs thy waking eyes
shall greet;
And when the twilight shadows steal across the leafy bower,
The glow-worm's lamp shall guide thee home at evening's
dewy hour.

A thousand gentle ministrants shall watch around thee keep,
When on thy heavy eyelids falls the soothing balm of sleep;
And friendly hands shall strew thy couch with dreams, devoid
of pain,
And plenteous as the rosy buds in Summer's fair domain.

Say, will Earth give thee forms so fair, or eyes so full of glee,
As those which hail the sunny morn from bush, and forest
tree?
Wilt thou find hearts as kind and warm among thy fellow
men,
As those which bound in blameless joy within the lonely
glen?

Alas! in quest of happiness man spends his golden prime,
But soon his bright creations fade beneath the stroke of
Time;
Across the brightest lot there steals a deep and nameless
gloom,
And all too late ye learn that nought is changeless, save the
tomb!

But what hath Earth to do with thee? Thy heart is all
too pure,
Her stores of glittering dross to prize, her follies to endure;
In its clear depth a plenteous seed of gentle thought was
sown,
And Nature, with a parent's care, still claims thee for her own.

Oh! turn, ere Hope's bright star hath waned, ere from thy
cheek hath pass'd
The joyous smile, the warm rich glow by youth's fair angel
cast;
Ere grief hath chilled thy heart's sweet fount, and in the
fruitless strife,
The radiant bloom hath fallen from the noble tree of Life!

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Mid balmy airs and gentle sounds, thy youth shall glide
away,
Like a pleasant hum that lulls the brain on a sultry summer
day;
And Death shall call thy soul from earth, with summons soft
and mild,
And grateful as the hush of eve to a young o'erwearied
child!"

Meanwhile, across Sir Ninian's open brow
Deep shades of thought were passing to and fro;
And, with that witching music, rolled away
The golden mist that on his senses lay.
Slowly he rose, as loth the charm to break,
And for the harsh, prosaic world, forsake
The brilliant realms, where late he wandered free,
In the full tide of Love and Poesy.

There was a look of sorrow in his eye,
As to the laughing nymphs he made reply,
Calmly but sad — as one who leaves the shore,
Obedient to duty's stern decree,
To seek his fortune where the billows roar,
And brave the perils of the stormy sea;
Yet, as beneath his prow the wild waves fly,
And the white canvas flutters in the wind,
Full oft he turns, to gaze, with tearful eye,
On the loved landscape that he leaves behind.

“Friends of my earliest years! By many a tie
Of fond remembrance and aspirings high,
By peaceful thought, and generous sympathy,
And strong affection, are ye bound to me!
When the first clouds across my being swept,
When by my parents' tomb I vainly wept,
And the cold marble where their dust was laid
Cast o'er the darkened earth its cheerless shade,
I wandered by the river's reed-grown side,
Mingling my hot tears with its swelling tide.
Ah! then, to soothe an orphan's bitter woes,
From the moist ground sweet comforters arose;
Each lowly herb that on the smooth bank grew,
Each fairy flower that drank the early dew,
All breathed of lovelier scenes, of purer day,
Of lands o'er whose bright paths no shadow lay,

Of thoughts, whose soaring pinions cleave the gloom,
And gild the dark horizon of the tomb.
When Joy once more across my pathway smiled,
Amid your shades I roved, no more a child,—
Panting for glory, eager for the strife
And blazoned trophies of a warrior's life;—
And sweeter dreams, of home and household love,
Soothed my vexed spirit like a brooding dove.
Ah! Life to me was then enchanted ground,
Hope smiled, and Love's young angel hovered round;
Lulled by his welcome whispers, on the sod
I lay reclined, or through the green walks trod,
Teaching the echoes of each woodland dell
To breathe the name of dark-eyed Isabel!
When in my breast arose a hidden fire,
With faltering hand I struck the Muse's lyre,
My soul's deep love I poured in burning words,
And drew sweet answers from the thrilling chords.
I sought the forest—o'er my heated brain
Your whispering zephyrs shed their soft control,
And Inspiration, with her heavenly train,
From your green boughs descended on my soul.
Too well I know what change, what woes unsaid
Await me in the world before me spread,
Where lips, that knew but smiles in life's bright morn,
Learn all too soon the bitter words of scorn;
And hearts, once closely joined in thought and will,
Grow hard and stern beneath that influence chill.

But ye are changeless.—In your mild, sweet eyes
The same deep fount of love and pity lies;
Ye know no scorn, no anger, and ye greet
With constant smiles your children's erring feet.
Fain would I dwell, secure from want and woe,
 In the long alleys of the forest wide,
Bask with the fairies in the noontide glow,
 And on a car of dazzling sunbeams ride.
Alas! it may not be.—A solemn vow
Hath bound the morion on my throbbing brow,
And calls me to the fields where grief and gloom,
Dark shame and sorrow, are the vanquished's doom;
And the proud wreath the haughty conqueror wears
Is laurel sown in blood and reaped in tears!
There sounds no footstep in my father's hall,
No mail-clad sentry guards its ivied wall,
No loving eye at my renown will smile,
But, from their deep graves in the cloistered aisle,
Each warrior chief would start, if my disgrace
Tarnished the glories of his ancient race,
If my weak footsteps left the path he trod,
Recreant alike to Honour and to God!
Not Pride alone, a nobler thought inspires
The true descendant of a hundred sires;
'Tis his, with worthy deeds to feed the flame
Their great hearts kindled at the shrine of Fame;
Transmitting, to the races yet unborn,
Aims pure and stainless as the virgin morn,

And glorious memories, that fill the heart
With emulation and aspirings high,
Bid selfish thoughts and grovelling cares depart,
And lend fresh lustre to the fearless eye.
Such is the task that waits me.—I depart,
Yet, with the fervour of a brother's heart,
I bless you.—May no tempest ever come
To blight the blossoms of your sylvan home;
Green be the grass, and fresh the vernal showers
That bathe the deep roots of your fragrant flowers;
And when the traveller's worn and weary feet
At twilight hour shall seek your calm retreat,
Oh! may he find, beneath the greenwood tree,
Thoughts pure and deep as those ye gave to me!"

He spake, and turned with thoughtful mien
From the laughing groups and the sunny sheen,
To a path, through silence and deepest shade,
That led to the verge of the haunted glade;
But the woodbine her sportive tresses wound
The massive stems of the oaks around;
The slight leaves bent to the warrior's hand,
But with sudden effort they rose anew,
O'er his glittering helmet, o'er shield and brand,
Their fluttering tendrils the breezes threw;
Nor might Sir Ninian aye unclasp
The close embrace of that clinging grasp;

While a mocking voice of pride and power
Came from the heart of each pale, sweet flower :
" In vain, O Child of Earth ! in vain
Wouldst thou strive to sever thy sylvan chain ;
At early dawn were the soft words said,
On thy slumbering senses the spell was laid ;
And never shall mortal hand unbind
The fragrant links by the Fairies twined ! "

There came a sweet voice from the rowan-tree.—
Oh ! the Nymph of the rowan was fair to see !
The glance of her lustrous eye, half hid
By the long dark fringe of its drooping lid,
Was like a calm river that flows between
Banks of wild heather and brackens green,
When the sun comes forth, and the morning sky
Is glassed in its crystal purity ;
A chaplet, culled from her native bough,
Shaded her high and dreamy brow
With its slender leaves and clusters bright,
And feathery blossoms of purest white
In her long fair hair twined lovingly,
Like wreaths of foam on a golden sea.
She told how a sorrowing wanderer strayed,
In the sultry noon, through the peaceful shade ;
But not alone of the changing cheek,
And the furrowed brow, did the wood-nymph speak,

She read all the hopeless misery,
The springs of bitterest grief, that lie
 In the haunted depths of the erring soul,
 Secret, and shrouded from man's control,
But revealed to the spirit's pitying eye.
She knew the history, sad and strange,
Of the homeless pilgrim—the wondrous change
From the village maiden, whose cheerful song
Rang through the meadows the whole day long—
To the famishing beggar, whose drooping head
With the silvery frost of age was spread,
Whose weary footsteps were doomed to roam
Through the heartless world, and to find no home.
Little, I ween, could the spirit guess
The depth of that mourner's wretchedness;
How could that pure and gentle frame
Know aught of sorrow, and want, and shame?
Yet her soft voice trembled, and to her eye
Sprang the glistening tears of sympathy.
Oh! lovelier far, to Sir Ninian's thought,
 Were those faltering accents, that pensive face,
Than the thousand graceful nymphs who sought
 To chain his steps in that elfin place.
For there blooms not a sweet and precious flower,
There shines not a gem in Beauty's dower,
So pure, so bright, as the tears that flow
From a stainless heart for another's woe!

With pride and joy was her blue eye fired
As she told, with the air of one inspired,
How the young Knight's greeting had soothed to rest
The storm that raged in that heaving breast;
Hope beamed once more on her pathway lone,
The star of Faith through the dark clouds shone,
And the heart, that in impotent wrath had borne
The world's cold pity and biting scorn,
Was won to the glorious realms above,
By one gentle accent, one look of love!

The voice of the fairies is silent now,
And a soft shade falls on each lifted brow;
The woodbine drops at the captive's knee:
The charm is broken, the path is free!
And hark to the sound, like a distant psalm
That the fresh air brings from those groves of balm;
From the smooth green turf at Sir Ninian's feet

The tiny elves that strain prolong,
And the stately queens of the wood repeat,
In silvery accents, that wondrous song:
And the trees all echo, "Pass on—pass on
Through toil to triumph, thou glorious one!
No spell can bind thee, no sprite molest
The gentle Knight whom the poor hath bless'd!"

With hopes that grew and ripened day by day,
Sir Ninian passed along his distant way ;
Wherever pain and grief, with vigils drear,
And sad forebodings, bowed the toilworn frame,
His course he stayed, and to the sufferer's ear
His cheering words like radiant sunbeams came ;
Wherever brave men rose, and fearless broke
From their chafed necks Oppression's iron yoke,
Rousing the echoes of the indignant sky
With their proud watchword, " Faith and Liberty !"
First in the van, the armed foes between,
The hero's snowy plume was ever seen,
And, from the stroke of his avenging sword,
In mute dismay shrank the invading horde.
And Fame was his : her mighty trumpet bore
His proud achievements on from shore to shore :
Youth's heart beat high, when many a grey-haired sire
Praised his bold deeds beside the cottage fire ;
And maidens watched, through twilight's deepening gloom,
The shadowy outline of his nodding plume,
And marvelled who might be the Ladye bright,
For whose dear sake rode forth so true a Knight,
His brightest years to spend in irksome toil,
And brave grim Death itself, for one approving smile.

A barren heath, across whose drear expanse
The autumn sun looked down with fiery glance,
No silver brook, with low melodious sound,
Rolled its clear waters o'er the thirsty ground;
But scanty trees, by lightning seared and bent,
To the brown turf a fitful shadow lent;
Nor could the traveller's wistful gaze descry
Aught save the trackless moor and sultry sky;
Weary and faint, across that desert waste,
For many a league his jaded steed he pressed;
With joyful heart he marked, at evening hour,

A lonely fort that crowned a neighbouring height,
Albeit the rocky steep and crumbling tower

Promised cold welcome to the stranger Knight.
No silken banner woo'd the listless wind,
No bearded squires the massive entrance lined;
One dark mysterious figure, gaunt and tall,
Leaned motionless against the castle wall;
On coal-black steed, in sable armour dress'd,
His vizard down, his burnished lance in rest,
With towering plumes, that idly rose and fell,
Before the portal frowned that gloomy Sentinel!

Courteous and frank, his barb Sir Ninian reined,
As he the summit of the mountain gained;
Shelter he craved, and food, and welcome rest,
Boon ever granted to wayfaring guest.

With eye of fierce disdain, and lip of pride
His lance the Black Knight shook, and thus replied :
“ Stoop thy proud crest to me, and from thy shield
Tear the white Cross that mars its azure field,
Symbol of creeds that long in thrall have held
The fire of Youth, the sense of sober Eld,
Ruling the world by base ignoble art,
And fears that ill beseem a soldier's heart !
Then, in my halls seek pleasure and repose,
For thee the feast is spread, the rich wine flows,
Sweet voices murmur many a loving word,
And Peace with garlands wreaths the warrior's sword.
But, if thy timorous soul shrink weakly back
And fear to leave thy fathers' beaten track ;
If Superstition draw her icy chain
Of hideous darkness, on thy heart and brain,
Then look thy last on yonder setting sun,
Like him, thy goal is reached, thy day is done,
And, ere once more he lights the Eastern wave,
The long dank grass shall flourish o'er thy grave ! ”

“ Oh ! lost to faith — to honour ! How canst thou
Bind the bright casque upon thy shameless brow,
Assume the arms, and bear the name of Knight,
Yet break the holiest vow a man can plight ?
Fortune and Fame, by deeds of prowess bold,
My gallant fathers won in days of old ;

But well they knew, the Cross alone had power
To cheer and comfort in their final hour—
Not faithless to their memory am I—
Thy rage I scorn, thy menace I defy!
My gage I throw—the Saints in whom I trust
Mine arm will strengthen, for my cause is just!”

They meet, they close—the sun’s departing beam
On their raised weapons casts a purple gleam,—
But ill the jaded steed and weary hand
The onslaught of the giant foe withstand.
Hark to the clash of steel—the desperate fray!

The slumbering hills have caught the stirring sound,
And, ere their echoes yet have died away,

The Christian Hero bleeds upon the ground!
And, with a vengeful smile and sullen brow,
The Elfin Knight is bending o’er him now;
Like some dark, beetling rock, against whose side
All vainly foams the ocean’s angry tide;
Wave after wave its snowy crest doth raise,

To the wild storm responds with threatening roar,
One moment dashes round the jutting base,
Breaks into spray, and falls, to rise no more!

CANTO IV.

A FEARFUL thing it is, to wake and find
Nought but the cold, damp wall of dungeon drear,
And massive bars, through which the gentle wind,
That loves the weak to raise, the sad to cheer,
Scarce greets with whisper soft the captive's ear!
When light again dawned on Sir Ninian's eye,
So chill, so lonely did that scene appear,
He gazed around him with a shuddering sigh,
Then bowed his weary head, and prayed at once to die.

Slowly the hours crept by on leaden wing,
Nor hope nor comfort brought the rising day;
Her pitying rays the Autumn moon did fling
In the dark chamber where the young Knight lay.
The months rolled past, and Winter stern and gray
Drove from the sky each light and fleecy cloud,
Laid his cold hand on field and floweret gay;
The joyous earth was wrapped in snowy shroud,
And through the long dark night the wind howled fierce
and loud.

And Summer came with all her wealth of flowers,
Green leaves were mirrored in each pleasant rill,
Blithely the birds sang in the garden bowers,
The bee hung murmuring o'er the fragrant hill;
But vainly throbbed the captive's bosom still
With heart-sick yearnings for his native air,
And proud, impatient feelings woke, until
Hope's radiant angel spread her pinions fair
And by his side alone frowned dark and stern Despair.

Thick, heavy clouds the morning sky o'ercast,
And boding shadows fall on mount and lea,
The zephyr's voice is hushed, and raindrops fast
Come pattering on the sward and leafy tree;
"And thus," Sir Ninian cries, "my fate will be!
The sun in clouds hath set, the night is come,
And never, never more shall dawn on me
The blessed rays that cheered my path of gloom —
My arm is idle now — my refuge is the tomb!"

Lo! while he speaks, the sun bursts forth anew,
O'er the green hills the fleeting mists are driven,
And Earth, arrayed in robes of loveliest hue,
Sends through her tears an answering smile to Heaven;

And a sweet voice replies: "To man are given
Sunbeams of rosy joy and clouds of pain;
The soul that mourns aright shall be forgiven —
The fertile mead that yields the richest grain,
Felt Winter's frosty breath, and drank Spring's fostering
rain!"

The earth is full of these deep mysteries,
Lessons of truth profound and glorious light,
Taught by the humblest flower, the lightest breeze,
The smallest star that crowns the brow of Night;
And though too oft we fail to read aright,
The fault is ours, not hers.—Sin's willing thrall,
Man binds the fetters o'er his darkened sight;
Yet the great Monitress instructs us all,
And blest indeed is he who heeds her ceaseless call!

With chastened heart, in lowly reverence bending,
On the damp stone the Christian kneeleth there,
And zephyrs, from that cheerless vault ascending,
Bear to the gates of Heaven his fervent prayer.
And sleep fell on his eyes, if sleep it were,
That charmed his wandering senses soothingly,
Chased from his brow the wintry marks of care,
And bade his joyous footsteps wander free
In golden groves that wind round Life's immortal tree.

There angels soared on rainbow-tinted wings,
 'Mid the bright precincts of the mystic shrine,
And deathless flowers, and radiant blossomings
 Filled the rich air with fragrance all divine;
 The costliest gems that deck an Eastern mine,
Grew pale before the golden harps which shone
 In seraphs' hands, who, formed in awful line,
Touched the full chords in glorious unison,
And poured forth hymns of praise before the Crystal
 Throne.

And silvery fountains through the garden sent
 Their gushing waters with a starry gleam;
A burning thirst came o'er him, and he bent
 To cool his fevered lips in that pure stream;
 Already at his side the bright forms seem,
The harps resound, the waters sparkle high—
 Alas! a rude, harsh voice dispels the dream,
And calls the slumberer—oh! how wearily,
Back to the icy chains of dark Reality.

The Black Knight stood beside him—his stern brow
 And swarthy features wore a gloomier shade,
As one in wrath and hatred forced to bow
 Unto a mightier Lord.—His hand he laid

Upon the captive's arm, and thus he said:
"The Saints, young Warrior! fain would set thee
free;

My spells avail not 'gainst their potent aid,
If strong thine arm, if firm thy courage be —
One trial waits thee yet — Arise and follow me!"

In silence and gloom they are hurrying on,
They have left behind them the dungeon lone,
The dusky vault and the winding stair;
And the cooling breath of the summer air
With her light wing fans the young man's brow,
And tinges his cheek with a healthful glow,
While the distant mountains, the cloudless sky,
And the fair green earth meet his raptured eye.
Silently, sternly at his side
In scornful wrath moves his moody guide,
No word he deigns, till they pause at last
'Neath the broad-arched door of a chamber vast.
'Twas a noble hall of the days of yore,
With vaulted roof and marble floor;
The arras, in many a rustling fold,
Shewed hoary Prophet and Conqueror bold,
The Martyr's palm and the Virgin's wreath,
Beauty and Splendour — Love and Death!

The sunlight streamed through the casement wide ;
Tall rose the columns on either side,
Enwreathed with carvings grotesque and wild,
Whence sculptured cherubs looked down and smiled
On flags that had fluttered in many a gale,
On spear, and hauberk and shirt of mail,
Casting deep shadows, and broad, and tall,
On the stately groups in that gorgeous hall.
On the crimson dais, in chair of state,
Begirt by his nobles, a Monarch sate ;
And beautiful ladies were there, arrayed .
In robes of ermine and rich brocade ;
Statesmen and chieftains, a princely band,
And gallant soldiers, whose dauntless hand
 Grasped battle-axe and glaive.
But Sir Ninian started, and held his breath,
For all the room wore a hue of death ;
Glazed was each eye and mute each tongue,
And on every pallid brow there hung
 A shade of the voiceless grave.
And the Black Knight hurried, with eager stride,
Towards a falchion that lay by the Monarch's side,
And he said : " Young Knight ! on that glittering steel
Hangs a Sovereign's power, a nation's weal ;
Unsheathe the blade, and my reign is o'er,
My spells can fetter thy limbs no more ;
Life shall be thine, and joy, and power,
For these broad green lands, and this princely tower

Shall hail thee as their Lord.
But if thou fail'st—if the magic brand
Drop from the grasp of thy trembling hand—
No guardian angel, no airy sprite,
No messenger sent from the halls of light,
Shall save thee again from my vengeful might—
Now, Warrior! take the sword!"

He seized the weapon—his proud lip curled
With courage to brave an opposing world,
And daring valour that aught defied;
While an eagle glance of hope and pride
For a moment lit up his large bright eye,
And his young heart throbbed with a sudden joy—
Joy, such as he feels who rises again
In health and hope from a bed of pain;
Or the exile who hears on a foreign strand
The musical tones of his native land.
He starts—he trembles. What sudden power
Daunts that fearless spirit in danger's hour?
A stir, a murmur—and yet again
Comes the fitful wail as of souls in pain—
Each spectral chieftain hath towards him leant,
Each rayless eye on his form is bent!
Alas for the Knight! his senses swim,
His strength hath left him, his eyes are dim;

The blood in his veins runs icy cold,
His trembling fingers relax their hold,
All bright hopes ebb from his soul away—
The Demon springs forth to seize his prey!
When hark! through the tumult and dread around
Floateth a sweet and solemn sound
Across his wilder'd brain—

 A sound like the wave of an angel's wing,
 Or the chiming fall of a crystal spring,—
And his heart is strong again.
Joy! joy! from the scabbard the blade flashes free,
The Enchanter falls at the Conqueror's knee!
There's a clash of arms, an exulting cry,
And the blazon'd shields from the walls reply;
While the voice of the clarion, loud and deep,
Startles the brave from their ghastly sleep.
And round him presses the ransomed crowd
With rapturous greeting and plaudits loud,
And the grey-haired monarch bids him rest
In his palace, a loved and honoured guest.

Brief was the tale.—In an evil hour
The king had bowed to the wizard's power,
And heard him pronounce the fearful doom,—
 In his regal halls, in his robes of pride,
 Motionless, speechless, for years to abide,
 With his nobles around him, his court at his side,
Like spectres called from the silent tomb;

Till a youthful stranger, a warrior lord,
By faith should vanquish the wizard fell,
Should draw from its scabbard the magic sword,
Free the slumbering monarch, and break the
spell.

And many came, with fearless heart,
And hand expert in martial art;
But vainly they tried the charm to break,
Their arm was strong, but their faith was weak.
And the crimson stream of their life-blood flowed
O'er the marble floor of that dark abode.
"My head is grey," said the aged man,
"My hand is useless, my cheek is wan,
And my few remaining years are given
To pray for pardon and peace with heaven.
No gallant son on my father's throne
Shall reign in glory when I am gone—
For I saw my children cut down in their prime,
Like young oaks felled in the summer time;
And I grieved for them, but I learnt ere long
To bless the hand that had slain them young,
And led them, in all their radiant bloom,
From a world of grief to the quiet tomb.
But one remaineth—yon maiden fair,
With the downcast eyes and auburn hair;
Take thou her hand, O warrior brave!
And when I am laid in my narrow grave,

Dwell in this proud ancestral tower,
Defend our land in its utmost need,
And guide, in the battle's stormy hour,
The glorious nation thy hand hath freed !”

With stately mien, in her rich attire,
The ladye stood by her kingly sire ;
And the flush o'er her pale cheek mantled high,
Like the roseate cloud of the morning sky,
When the bright sun rises, in life and glee,
From his dewy couch in the Eastern sea.
“Happy, thrice happy !” Sir Ninian cried,
“Is he who woos thee, O gentle bride !
Less for the wealth and the regal power,
And the broad domains of thy princely dower,
Than for the innocent love which lies
In the calm, clear depth of thy large blue eyes,—
For the lofty spirit, the touching grace
That breathes in each line of thy beauteous face !
O lady ! when sorrow hath dimmed mine eye,
When the cheerless years roll slowly by,
With pain, and anguish, and sorrow fraught,
’Twill be a blessed, a soothing thought,
That my arm, all unworthy though it be,
From trouble and danger hath set thee free ;
That thy lips have smiled on my dawning fame,
And breathed in thy daily prayers my name !

Lovely, and gentle, and pure thou art —
But an image is shrin'd in my faithful heart;
A dark-eyed maiden hath been the theme
Of my boyish fancy, my youthful dream.
Dearer to me than jewels rare,
Is each glossy tress of her raven hair.
And the hope of her love, like a Polar star,
Hath guided me onward through toil and war.
And if through my leagured foes I passed,
Fearless and swift as the eddying blast —
If the tread of my courser were firm and fleet,
I sought for glory and high renown,
War's haughty trophies and Fame's bright crown,
To lay them all at that maiden's feet!"

Then the ladye smiled, and the monarch pressed,
With cordial greeting, the hand of his guest,
And bade him rest, while the harpers grey
His praises sang in the revels gay,
While the sparkling wine in floods was poured,
And the nobles met round the festive board;
And then, with a calm and cheerful heart,
Blessed and blessing, in peace depart,
The home of his youth once more to see,
To dwell in splendour and calm delight,
For gentle and good must the lady be
Who could win the love of so true a knight!

The feast is spread at twilight hour,
The bright lamps gleam in hall and bower,
The silvery voices of harp and lute
Rouse the echoes that many a year were mute.
The jewelled wine-cup sparkles high,
And with bounding step move the dancers by.
But Sir Ninian's heart, mid that joyous band,
Pines for one glimpse of his native land;
Like a bird, from its narrow cage that springs,
Pants through the trackless air to soar,
Nor stays nor droops till its tired wings
It folds in the shady woods once more.

On, on, by the lake and the green hill-side,
O'er moor and glen doth Sir Ninian ride;
And Fame goes with him — his deeds are spread
Through hall and cottage, from realm to realm,
And the magical charm of Romance is shed,
Like a halo of light, round his laurelled helm.
His cheek is flushed, and his heart beats high,
And a glance of pride is in his eye;
His fancy pictures the coming hour
When, in the baron's lordly tower,
Before the lady, on bended knee,
The fruit of his venturous years he lays,
Hears her kindly welcome, her gentle praise,
Takes her jewelled hand, and proudly says,
"All this have I wrought for love of thee!"

On the rocky verge of the mountain's brow,
Pensive and silent, he standeth now,
Gazing on many a well-known scene —
The peaceful valley, the meadows green,
The village, whose thatched roofs are rising through
Copses of hazel and sober yew;
While alders and drooping willows shed
A tender gloom o'er the river's bed.
See where the convent lifts on high
The blessed Cross towards the summer sky!
Symbol of Faith, the dearest boon
That ever to mortal need was given,
Fixing, alike in joy or gloom,
Her stedfast eyes on the answering heaven!
The lonely home of his childish years
Its frowning battlements uprears,
Like an aged soldier, whose life was spent
In the busy camp and the crowded tent;
When Time hath weakened his busy hand,
He comes to die in his native land;
Half sad, half scornful, his eyes survey
The mirth of the rustic holiday;
His faltering lips still love to tell
Of countless dangers by field and fell;
And, in scenes of plenty, he grieveth sore
For the glorious days that return no more.—
There, where the woods are waving high,
The Castle bursts on the gazer's eye,

Tower and bastion dimly seen
 The ancient forest trees between.
 That spot, enshrined in his inmost heart,
 Before him rose when all else was dim,
 And ever will be, till life depart,
 The dearest place in the world to him:
 Hark! on the wings of the glowing morn,
 The song of the peasant is upward borne:
 And the merry laughter, sweet and wild,
 Of many a young and sportive child.
 But o'er Sir Ninian's heart is spread
 A cloud of sorrow and nameless dread,
 A sudden shadow, dark and chill,
 A dim foreboding of future ill.
 From the hills he turned sad and pale,
 And slowly he rides through the peasant vale.

An old man sat by the fountain side,
 Listlessly hear the murmuring tide:
 And the wanderer started for in his face
 A faint resemblance could be trace
 To the immortal whose towering form was seen
 In every spot of the village green.
 Whose tales of danger and midnight fear
 With thrilling charm won the hearts of ear
 Glowing with hope and joy, when far
 From his father's mansion home he passed.

No foot was so nimble, no eye so clear,
As those of the burly forester.
Now his sight is darkened, his hand is weak,
And the colour hath left his furrowed cheek,
And the wanton breath of the mountain air
Lifts the scanty locks of his silver hair.
Oh! it is not when, lured by visions gay,
Smiling we tread on the unknown way,
And joy that the moments that past us roll
Bring us nearer each day to the promised goal.
Oh! it is not *then* that we pause to heed
The footprints of Time's remorseless speed!
But when the wearying strife is past,
And the fevered spirit seeks rest at last;
When we rove through the solemn woods once more,
That beheld our sports in the days of yore;
When faces that memory often brought
In the hour of chastened and sober thought
Meet us, all withered by time and care,
With palsied frame and snowy hair,
And eyes, whose kind glance may never again
Soothe our wayward heart in its hours of pain;
Oh! *then* we learn how dearly bought
Are the fleeting treasures we eagerly sought;
Then first we waken, and sigh to find
How much of our journey is left behind!

By the huntsman's side doth Sir Ninian stand,
And much he questions of all that befell
The haughty chiefs of the neighbouring land,
And the owners of yonder proud Castell,
But most of the Lady Isabel.
And the old man answered: "Hast thou not heard,
Ere the year its fleeting course had sped,
With stately pageant the gallant Lord
By the side of his warrior sires was laid;
And his daughter gave her snowy hand
To a chieftain in many a battle tried,
The bravest and best of our Border land,
Sir Ronald the dauntless of Bemerside!
Now, at the head of a thousand spears,
With stalwart arm and strong,
His ancient banner the good Knight bears
Against the invading throng.
With her fair-haired children at her side,
In the old baronial hall,
Pensively sitteth his noble bride,
Blessing and blessed by all!"

The speaker ceased, and, rising painfully,
His staff he took, and journeyed on his way;
The young man, wrapped in gloomiest reverie,
Beside the gurgling waters speechless lay.

He heeded not the joyous shouts that rose
From flowery meadow and sequestered dell ;
He saw not, from the high o'er-arching boughs,
How broad and dark the length'ning shadows fell.
Through the green lanes, with quick and willing
feet,

The youths came, laden with the golden sheaves,
And children, bending 'neath the burden sweet
Of Summer's bright field-flowers, and perfumed
leaves.

Amid that joyous train, the Knight appears,
Like some tall tree by lightning seared and cleft,
Its spectral arms towards the blue sky it rears,
Mocking the wealth of beauty round it left ;
Still at its root the flowers in fragrance wreath,
The wee birds still their merry carols pour,
But Spring's mild rains, and Summer's welcome
breath

Its sapless boughs shall clothe with leaves no
more.

A sudden thought comes o'er his darkened soul,—
His noble destrier he mounts again,
And, yielding to a new and strange control,
With fiery haste he rides across the plain.
Once more will he behold the face, that oft
In happy dreams o'er him seemed hovering near,
Once more will listen to the accents soft
Of that young voice, in better hours so dear !

And then depart—it matters little where
The exile tries to hide his cureless woe—
Nor wealth, nor fame, can chase the cloud of care
That settles darkly on his furrowed brow;
For him, Earth spreads her countless stores in vain,
The spring of Love and Hope will never dawn again!

The Ladye sits at the vesper hour,
By the lattice high of her stately bower,
And the sunset gleams through the chesnut bough
On her placid lip and her lofty brow,
As she bends, with a smile and look of love,
Her slumbering infant's rest above;
Or turns, with a mother's watchful pride,
To the bright-eyed fairies that round her glide,
Darting like sunbeams through the gloom
And the stately hush of that lordly room.
Oh! lovelier far doth the Ladye seem
Than when she basked in youth's radiant beam,
And roved by the lake and the mountain side,
In conscious beauty and girlish pride;
Time hath but shed o'er her pensive face
A matron sweetness, a tender grace,
And her pure and sculptured brow hath caught
A shade of solemn and pious thought,
And the glance of her dark and lustrous eye,
So proud, so lofty in days gone by,

Sweet and calm as the gentle dove,
Reveals the depths of a mother's love.
Why sighs the Ladye? Doth memory bring
Sad thoughts of life's gay and sunny spring?
Doth she grieve for the lover, whose spirit proud
 Risked life and fortune, her smile to claim?
Ah, no! for the love that Sir Ninian vowed
 Ne'er flushed her cheek with maiden shame;
Unmarked in the crowds who sought her hand
For her princely dower and spreading land,
She knew not the fervour, the steadfast truth,
And the changeless faith of his sorrowful youth;
All the pure, deep love, that unconfessed
For years was shrined in that fearless breast.—
Hush! with a soft, harmonious swell,
 Borne on the whispering summer air,
Comes the distant chime of the convent bell,
 Calling the peasants to evening prayer.
And the Ladye raises her eyes to Heaven,
 And her lips in silent fervour move,
Thanks for each earthly blessing given—
 Prayers of anxious, yet trusting love—
And the children, hushing their shouts of glee,
With eyes upturned, whisper "Ave, Marie!"

Hark! through the stillness brooding round,
Whence comes that strange and threat'ning sound?
Through the crashing branches, with reckless speed,
Goes the echoing tramp of a furious steed!
And see, through the forest's twilight gloom,
The wave of a steel-clad chieftain's plume!
Have not the ancient legends told
Of spirits that watch o'er each feudal hold,
And summon, by warning voice or sign,
The fated souls of their kindred line?
The Ladye watches, in fear and dread,
By the taper's flickering light,
The couch where her rosy babes are laid
In slumber, the live-long night;
And she prays for the loved ones sleeping there,
Through a world of trouble, and toil, and care,
That God may be their shield;
And save from the point of the foeman's sword,
And from pining sickness, her gallant Lord,
On his distant battle-field.

Once more within the ancient Gothic pile
A martial stranger moves, with sounding tread,
Through the broad shadows of the length'ning aisle,
And by the graves where rest the glorious dead.

Once more, before the holy shrine where stands
The image of the Virgin, pure and fair;
With haggard brow, white lips, and folded hands,
A suppliant kneels, in "agony of prayer."
Mother of God! what bitter anguish, sealed
In the lone bosom, far from mortal sight,
By many an aching heart hath been revealed
At thy dim altar, in the hush of night!
What fervent supplications still are made,
What gleams of hope and consolation rise
O'er the dark paths of human sorrow, shed
By the soft light of those calm, pitying eyes!
We hold, no child of Earth may ever stand
As mediator by Jehovah's throne;
On all our works a blessing we demand—
To hear and answer rests with God alone!
Yet lovely was the thought that gave to thee
In the bright skies a mother's gentle power,
And crowned with Heaven's divinest majesty
The holiest name that ever woman bore!
Oh! ye who scoff at beads and cross of stone,
With pitying smile behold the stranger's prayer,
The Word of Truth claim for yourselves alone,
And harshly blame the creed ye do not share!
Go to the prison cells, the hovels drear,
Where the pale Sister kneels beside the bed,
Still whispers comfort to the failing ear,
And pillows on her arm the dying head!

Go to the halls where Raphael's gifted hand
Hath traced the sweet Madonna, pure and fair;
Where Guido's saints in golden beauty stand,
With eyes upraised and long dishevelled hair!
Go! hear through dome and lofty arches pealing,
The Miserere's solemn chant and slow,
Stirring the depths of true religious feeling,
Making the full heart throb, the warm tears flow!
And learn to bless the faith that sanctifies
And kindles genius in the lofty mind,
And with its kind, untiring charities,
Soothes the worst agonies of all mankind.
O sacred is each legendary tale
That sways the spirit with its mild control;
Each lofty art that, in this dreary vale
Of guilt and weakness, elevates the soul;
And hallowed is the meanest, lowliest sod,
Where stricken hearts have bowed in prayer before their
God!

Could each ivied chapel, each minster old,
Tell the varying scenes that their walls behold,
The thousands whose worn and weary feet
Seek the sheltering calm of their still retreat,
The secret grief of the troubled breast;
The tears of the mourner who, weeping, pressed
To the pale, cold marble, his fevered brow,
And envied the sleepers at rest below;

And, darker still, the accusing tears
That start at the thoughts of our misspent years,
Of the glowing fancy, the guileless truth,
And the innocent joys of our vanished youth —
Peace! hath not the dim and antique fane
A nobler moral, a loftier strain?
In solemn whispers, speaketh it not
Of blessings poured on our mortal lot,
Of hopes that through the circling gloom,
Like sunbeams rest on the narrow tomb,
Of faith that raises the soul to heaven,
Where doubt is forgotten, and sin forgiven,
And saints and white-robed angels yearn
To bless the Prodigal's late return?
Yes! doubt it not — Each deep-drawn sigh,
Each tear that drops from the mourner's eye,
Each wail of the spirit oppressed, forlorn,
On the wings of an angel is upward borne;
And the prayer of faith, and the cry of pain,
Never, oh! never, are breathed in vain!

The morn is breaking — sunbeams glitter o'er
The chequered marble of the chapel floor;
The young birds piping in the hedgerows gay
With jocund welcome greet the new-born day.
Sir Ninian rises — the wild strife is past,
And stern resolve and courage high are glassed

On his pale forehead. With a steady hand
Unclasping from his side his trusty brand,
He lays it on the altar—never more
Shall the keen weapon fill the land with gore,
Through hall and hamlet spread its master's name,
And reap in slaughter what the world calls Fame!
Calmly he turns, yet lingers for awhile
'Neath the broad arch of the adjacent aisle,
Bending, with quivering lip and moistened eye,
O'er the cold grave-stone where his parents lie;
Then turns abruptly from his kindred dust,
As one who fears his changing mood to trust,
Crosses the chancel, gains the open door,
And in the neighbouring woods is lost to sight once
more!

And many came—high names of pride and power,
To seek the master of that feudal tower,
But each drew back in wonder and in awe,
No answering voice they heard, no form they saw,
Only they found, where wave the thistles tall,
His jaded courser by the ivied wall,
And on the altar-stone of marble gray,
The hero's falchion in its scabbard lay.
They sought the castle—there, the spider flung
Her airy web where once the banners hung;

Nor from that hour, amid the forest green
Or smiling valley, was Sir Ninian seen,
He passed, as o'er the heaven's starry plain,
Flashes with sudden gleam a meteor train,
Then into darkness fades, and ne'er returns again!

* * * * *

O'er hill and dale a saintly Palmer roved,
With looks benign and mild; the children loved
Beside him oft in silent joy to stray,
And hear him talk of Virtue's pleasant way,
Of gifts, unknown to earth, that good men prize,
And flowers that bloom alone in Paradise.
A welcome guest beside the cottage fire,
He held sweet converse with the grey-haired sire,
With kindly voice gave many a counsel sage,
And soothed the querulous ills of restless Age.
He to the trembling mourner solace gave,
And shed a ray of comfort round the grave,
Telling how parted friends, on some bright shore
In joy should meet, to be divorced no more.
And when the sinner, from his evil course
Turned, with the shudderings of keen remorse,
The holy man would lend a patient ear,
And pause, the tale of penitence to hear,

Point upwards, from the mists of chill despair,
And fill the contrite heart with faith and prayer.
There was a shade of deep and settled woe,
A mournful sweetness, on the pilgrim's brow ;
His name, his race none knew — yet all who gazed
On those meek eyes, in adoration raised,
Who marked the soft rebuke, the patient smile,
The brow that felt no fear, and knew no guile,
Guessed that a mournful tale was his — a heart
In heavy trials that had borne a part,
Had welcomed sorrow as a frequent guest,
Had sighed and suffered — but was now at rest !
Yet some there were, who said that thrilling tone
For earth was all too beautiful and clear ;
They deemed that, sent from God's eternal throne,
A sinless angel from a radiant sphere,
He came, by word and deed of love, to win
Men from the thorny paths of shame and sin ;
So free from worldly passion, worldly taint,
Was each mild accent of the gentle Saint !

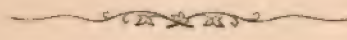
Hast thou e'er stood upon the rocky shore,
And heard below the angry billows roar,
When storms arose and winds were raging loud,
And lightnings flashed athwart the murky cloud ;
When many a trembling bark, at random tossed,
Was dashed against the bleak and rugged coast,

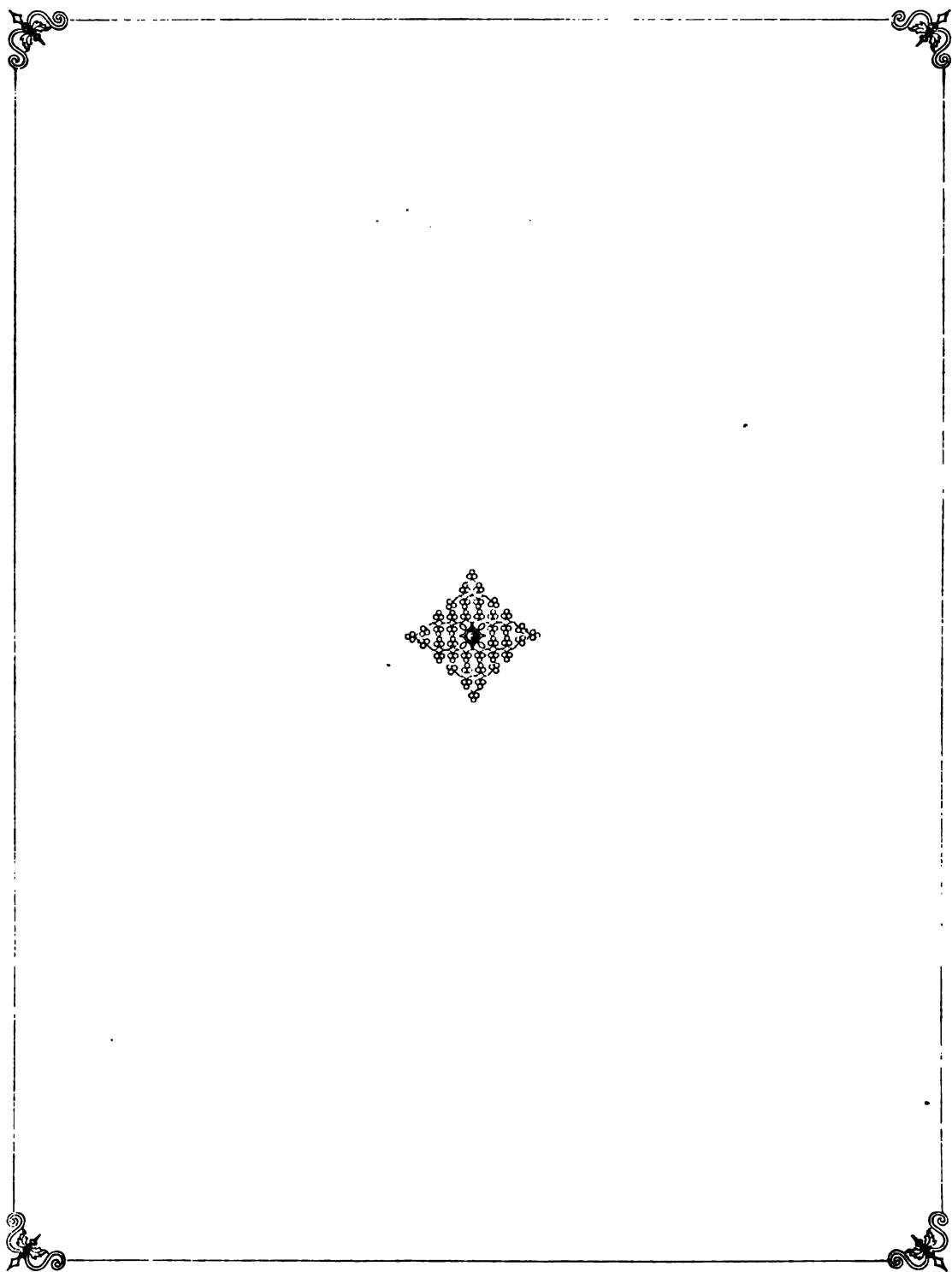
While human strength and science tried in vain
To quell the fury of the troubled main?
And hast thou thought, how like that restless tide
Is man with all his passion, all his pride;
Man, who, when all his morning dreams are flown,
And all his cherished idols overthrown,
Dares to oppose a creature's finite will
To His, who bade the raging seas "Be still!"
Hast thou again, upon the beetling height,
Stood in the silence of the summer night,
When the bright silver stars gleamed in the West,
And scarce a ripple marked the ocean's breast;
And hast thou seen how that broad, heaving main,
Whose waves so late were reared in tumult wild,
Gave softly back the moon's pale rays again,
Calm as the smile of some fair, sleeping child?
Thus, when the Christian heart, at once bereft
Of all the social joys that Time had left,
Prostrates itself before the Father's throne,
And weeping prays: "Thy will, not mine, be done!"
Then, angel-whispers hope and peace impart
To the dark caverns of the bursting heart,
And, towards the courts of radiant bliss above,
Faith wafts the spirit on the wings of Love!
True! Morning's jocund ray, and Eve's soft shower
Will ne'er again revive the withered flower,
And Sorrow, once within the heart enshrined,
Is oft, in lonely hours, recalled to mind—

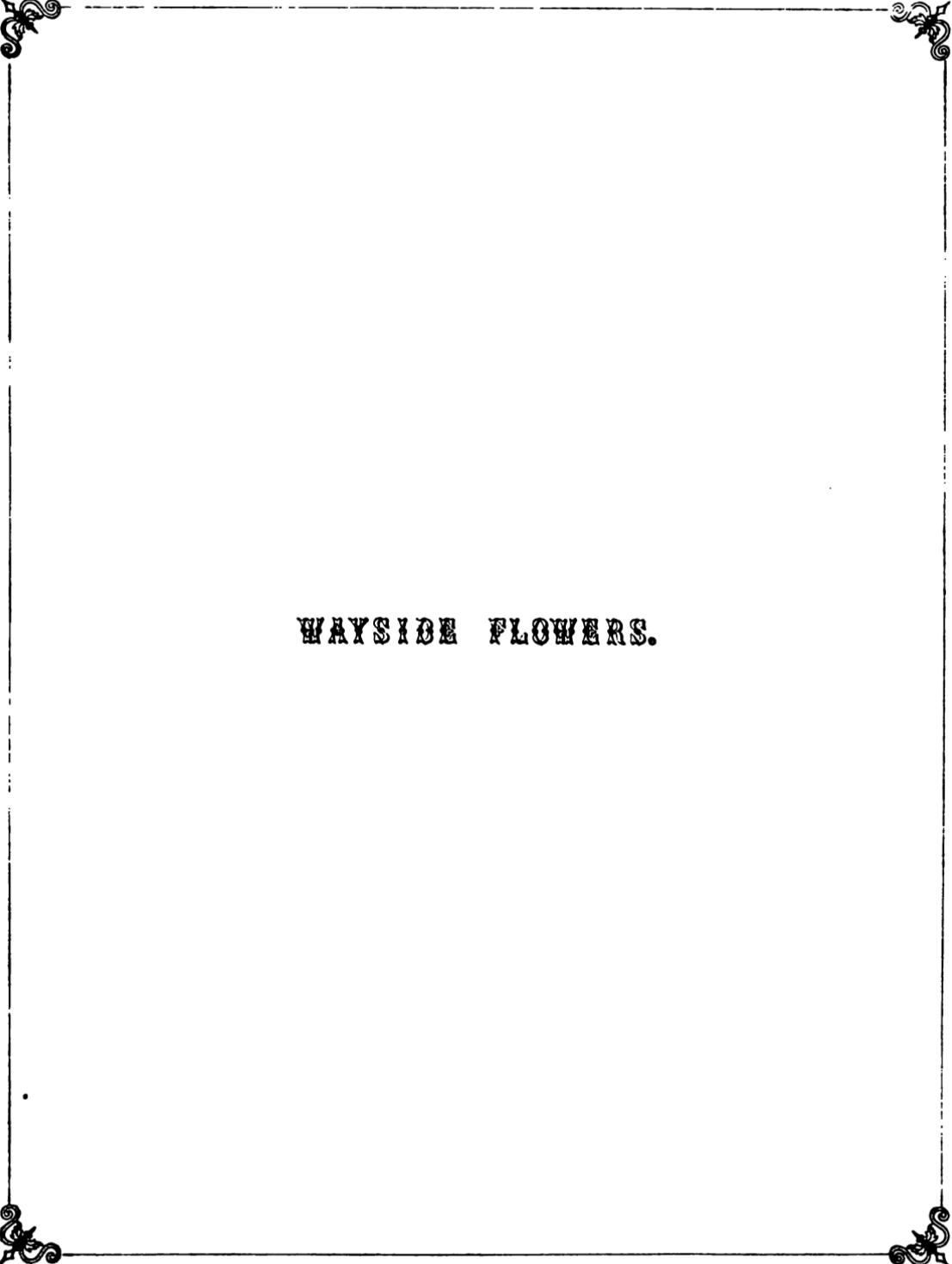
But every minor grief that life can bring,
Glides softly by, like vernal rain in Spring,
Nor wakes a pang within the gentle breast
That Grief hath sanctified and God hath blessed !

And, when his hour of agony was past,
Sir Ninian's troubled heart found peace at last —
Peace, but not rest. — The purest founts that burst
From mortal urns may never quench the thirst
Of the rapt soul that hears, though but in dreams,
The chiming fall of Eden's countless streams.
So, with a pensive brow, an aching breast,
Longing "to flee away and be at rest,"
Yet still resigned through earthly paths to roam,
And patient wait, till God should call him home ;
Sir Ninian slowly passed from land to land,
Till Death's kind angel, with a pitying hand,
Drew a soft veil across his weary eyes,
And led the soul to rest in sinless Paradise !

30th September, 1854.







WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

TO

My own dearest Mamma,

WITH THE LOVE, AND ALL THE LOVING WISHES

OF THIS

HOLY SEASON.

Christmas, 1856.

Wayside Flowers.

HOLY and gentle was the thought of yore
That bade such faith in marvellous relics dwell,
Giving meet reverence unto all who wore
The monk's rough garb, or pilgrim's scallop shell;
Nor less the love that in our later days
Of the sweet flowers that spring up in our ways,
And smile upon us with their calm bright eyes,
Makes relics, to be treasured up for years,
Of weary watchings or of fainting fears —
Pale scentless buds, — dim shadowy memories
Rising in silence from the mind's lone cell
Like ghosts, evoked by some resistless spell.

Such relics have I — leaves of withered fern,
Calling up visions of an ancient tower,
Grey massive rocks arched o'er the streamlet's urn,
Wild breezy hill, and quiet fairy bower;

A spray of ivy from an Abbey wall,
Whose crumbling fragments all unheeded fall;
A violet, gathered in some hidden nook
Where a stray sunbeam rested on the swell
Of moss-encrusted banks, thence brought, to dwell
In the recess of some beloved book,
Linking with each sweet verse the poet wrought
A train of sorrowful or soothing thought.

Some, yet more precious, in the Book of Prayer
Folded, some impulse of the soul to mark,
Some bright and blessed thought that glimmered there
When all beyond seemed cheerless, cold, and dark;
Oh! if at times like breezes o'er the deep,
Such recollections o'er my spirit sweep,
Thickly with fond and fleeting visions strewn—
Deem it not sinful—for the love which clings
Round the most fragile of Earth's lowly things,
May for such wandering fantasies atone,
Nor flows the crystal stream of worship less
From the full urns of human tenderness!

And therefore have I called you "Wayside Flowers,"
Ye gentle thoughts that find an utterance here,
For ye to me have brought, in lonely hours,
A joy, a solace welcome and most dear;

Relics are ye of brilliant summer days,
 Of silent vigils by the fitful blaze
 Of student lamp, or hearth's fantastic flame;
 Some that, unbidden, o'er the senses shed
 Odours, as from a hidden violet bed;
 And some, like angel-visitants, that came,
 Heaven's glory tinging yet their waving wings,
 Heaven's music trembling on their harps' sweet strings.

And if, perchance, too much of sadness seem
 In the far echoes of my verse to dwell,
 Sadd'ning the fancies of a happy dream
 As with the tolling of a funeral knell;
 If the strange darkness that so lately hung
 Above the outer world, hath haply flung
 Its shadow on the heavy heart within,
 Sweeping its airy visions oft away,
 Mocking, with fitful gloom, its weak essay
 Back to the blessed light its way to win;
 Still hath it striven, through tears, to recognise
 The Hand of One, All-Merciful, All-Wise.

For everywhere around our paths are flowers,
 Though our dim eyes too often see them not;
 Ev'n with the glories of Life's brightest hours
 We bind the canker of our mortal lot;

With petulant murmur, or with angry frown,
Beneath our hurrying feet we tread them down,
And careless, see their loveliest hues depart,
Then, all too late, when the far goal is won,
And clouds are gathering round our evening sun,
We clasp the withered leaflets to our heart;
With vain upbraidings our blind haste deplore,
For tears revive those faded blooms no more.

Some thought of this—it may be, oft in vain—
My hand hath sought amid these rhymes to trace,
For whose faint sounds, O gentle Friends! I fain
In your warm hearts would crave a resting-place;
Ye, whose kind thoughts are all I seek below,
Whose love the richest guerdon I would know,—
This simple garland for your brows I twine;
Would that each word, each roving fantasy,
A spell of power, a mighty link might be
To knit your souls even closer unto mine,
And waft, at times, across your thoughtful hours,
A gentle fragrance, as of Wayside Flowers!



The Three Churches.

THREE names there are, three holy names that to my
heart are dear
As the music of a friendly voice we long have yearned
to hear,
As a sudden gleam of rosy light on a cold and cheerless
day,
As a thought of happiness and home to an exile far away.

Three Churches, in whose solemn aisles my head I've
bowed in prayer,
Have laid the wants and weaknesses of my erring spirit
bare,
Sent forth my thoughts in doubt and dread, till, like the
Patriarch's dove,
They brought me back the olive branch of hope and faith
and love!

One stands, amid the crowded streets, a calm and lonely
spot,
Upon its trees and billowy turf the bright sun smileth
not,
And round the gates at morn and eve, is heard the wild
turmoil
Of crowds who plod their daily round of care and weary
toil;

Yet beautiful and blest to me that silent spot did
seem,
Hallowed by many a solemn thought and many a childish
dream,
For names which I had learnt betimes to love and to
revere,
Were graven on the cold white stones within the church-
yard near.

There too, from chants and incense-clouds and pompous
rites of Rome,
With loving heart I turned again to the simpler creed of
home,
And quelling the tumultuous thoughts which long had
been at strife,
Went forth with fearless step and firm, on the broad
highway of life.

In absence oft, and grief, such grief as my weak spirit
won,
My thoughts turned to that House of Prayer, as flowers
towards the sun,
And fondly deemed, through varied scenes and wanderings
manifold,
This earth for me no dearer place, no holier shrine
could hold.

'Twas a bright, bright Sabbath morning—my tears were
rising fast,
When last beneath the linden trees with lingering steps
I passed,
And sad unto my yearning heart, and strange it seemed
to be,
That none would mark my vacant place—that none would
think of me!

For often, in those solemn hours when, in my room
apart,
I close the Sacred Book, and pause to commune with
my heart,
I see once more that solemn fane, and ever with it
rise
Throngs of past joys and buried hours, and sadd'ning
memories.

I look back on the sea of Time, with its constant ebb
and flow
Of hopes and fears that stirred my soul a few short years
ago ;
I call to mind the silent awe, when first, with stifled
breath,
I stood within the darkened room, and saw the face of
Death ;

I call to mind the lofty faith that took no thought
of fear,
The hope that to the future looked, and saw no darkness
near —
Oh ! I would give the visions fair that throng at times
my brain,
All, all my dreams of earthly bliss, for those high
thoughts again !

There stands a Church, a gray old Church, with creeping
weeds bedight,
Rearing a square and massive tower above the sea-washed
height,
Like a sentry, set from year to year his lonely watch
to keep
In calm and quiet vigilance above the treacherous
deep ;

The Iron Curtain

These are the only two in the world that have been
 1942
 The first of the two is the one that has been
 1942
 The second of the two is the one that has been
 1942
 The third of the two is the one that has been
 1942

1. The first of these is the fact that the United States is a free country. This means that we have a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. We have a system of checks and balances that prevents any one branch of government from becoming too powerful. We have a Bill of Rights that protects the freedoms of speech, religion, and assembly. We have a system of justice that is fair and impartial. We have a system of education that is free and compulsory. We have a system of health care that is universal. We have a system of social security that provides for the elderly and the disabled. We have a system of public housing that provides for the poor. We have a system of public transportation that provides for the convenience of the people. We have a system of public utilities that provides for the needs of the people. We have a system of public safety that provides for the protection of the people. We have a system of public works that provides for the improvement of the environment. We have a system of public art that provides for the enrichment of the culture. We have a system of public recreation that provides for the enjoyment of the people. We have a system of public information that provides for the education of the people. We have a system of public opinion that provides for the expression of the people. We have a system of public action that provides for the achievement of the people. We have a system of public life that provides for the fulfillment of the people. We have a system of public death that provides for the dignity of the people. We have a system of public life that provides for the fulfillment of the people. We have a system of public death that provides for the dignity of the people.

1. The first step is to identify the problem or goal. This involves understanding the current situation and what needs to be achieved.

2. The second step is to gather information. This includes researching the problem, identifying resources, and consulting with experts.

3. The third step is to develop a plan. This involves setting priorities, determining the sequence of actions, and allocating resources.

4. The fourth step is to implement the plan. This involves executing the actions, monitoring progress, and making adjustments as needed.

5. The fifth step is to evaluate the results. This involves comparing the actual outcomes with the expected results and identifying areas for improvement.

Within those walls a stranger voice in tones of music
stole,
And it wrought a change, a blessed change, within my
troubled soul;
The Throne of God I could not see, for my eyes with
tears were dim,
Yet though my voice was faint and low, I strove to call
on Him.

He heard me in my sore distress, He bade the clouds
depart,
And sent his blessed sunshine in, to cheer my trembling
heart;
And now, amid the blessings rare He showers upon
my ways,
Not least I count the discipline of those weary summer
days;

For I have learnt how vain it is, with dread of
future ill,
To shed across a tangled path a gloomier shadow
still;
I've learnt how deep and boundless are the riches of
His grace,
How weak and worthless is the trust that in ourselves we
place.

I know that yearnings and regrets to dreaming hearts
will come,
That Grief will be a frequent guest in every earthly
home,
That hopes will wane, and friends depart—but this, too,
well I know,
That He who sends the trial will give strength to bear
the blow ;

And therefore, when ungratefully this wayward heart of
mine
Is tempted at some passing cloud to murmur and
repine,
Then stilling every rebel thought, there straight returns
to me
A vision of those summer tears, and that old Church by
the sea !

The last, the loveliest of the three—it stands amid the
town,
Like a beautiful poetic thought o'er Life's dull journey
thrown,
Green grows the grass around its walls, and orchard-
blossoms bring
Their fairest wreaths of red and white to crown the brow
of Spring ;

And when the sun of summer looks from out the
cloudless skies,
And young leaves droop and flowers grow faint beneath
his burning eyes,
All there is cool and still and calm, and softly tempered
light
Steals through the many-coloured panes on the pavement
cold and white.

I love within those walls to hear the young fresh voices
blend
In anthems, that like incense-wreaths to Heaven's pearl
gates ascend ;
And when the chant hath died away, and the morning
rites are done,
Sit listening to the teachings high of the Poet's gifted
son ;

To hear him with that solemn voice, rich, deep and
sweet, unfold
The mysteries of Love divine, the prophecies of
old,—
To learn of him how best the ills of our mortal life to
bear,
Clad in the might of child-like Faith, and all-prevailing
Prayer.




The Three Churches.


101

And when from that sweet spot I turn, to my daily
duties back,
A new and glorious light seems cast across Life's beaten
track;
And words of counsel and rebuke and holy thoughts, the
while,
Re-echo like an organ blast down Memory's pillared
aisle.

Three names are graven on my heart — the names of
Christian men
Whose high and solemn teachings long within its depths
have lain,
Awakening when its surface by some sudden wind is
stirred,
Like echoes on the mountain peaks roused by a careless
word.

And ever when at morn and eve I bend the knee in
prayer
For all I hold most dear on earth, those names are
whispered there;
And I pray that all the blessings they unto my heart
have given,
Around their homes and hearts may fall, like summer
dew from Heaven;





May He, who far from mortal gaze, wears his fadeless
diadem,
In the vineyard of His holy Church raise many like
to them,
And give us grace to hear aright, and drive our doubts
away,
Till this dim uncertain dawn be merged in Faith's all-
cloudless day ;

Till before the banner of the Cross all worldly tumults
cease,
And the earth become one mighty fold, one home of
loving peace!
Oh! when I muse on themes like these, how vain how
light appear
The trivial joys, the selfish woes that vex our bosoms
here !


Such thoughts ye bring, ye holy Three! thoughts which
indeed have power
To shed a fragrance ever new o'er many a lonely
hour,
To quench the flame of human pride, to clear the sullen
brow,
And fill the heart with love for Heaven, and love for all
below.



The Three Churches.

103

And, for your sakes, the village church, whose simple
Sabbath bell
Sends forth its welcome summonings o'er heath and
wooded dale,—
The minster that in crowded marts uprears its ancient
wall,—
The humblest shrine where Christians meet—I love and
bless them all!



Hope and Fear.

I SAT within my chamber
One winter night alone,
And across my wakeful spirit
Came a distant under-tone,
A murmur as of voices
In sweet alternate song —
The one was low and plaintive,
And the other glad and strong.

And the first sighed, "Oh, how weary,
How hard a task is Life!
A long and toilsome pathway,
A field of hopeless strife!
The skies are fair at morning,
The summer sun shines bright —
How soon returns the winter,
How dreary is the night!"

"In the journey, in the battle,"
Breathed the other joyous song,
"Through travail and through danger
The soul becomes more strong;
If ye hold a mournful vigil
Through the night of pain and care,
Look upward to the heavens,
And lo! the stars are there!"

"The trusting heart of childhood,
How soon its mirth is gone!
The hopes that lured us onward
Lie scattered one by one,
Like withered leaves in autumn
Beneath inclement skies,—
Like blossoms in the spring-tide
When stormy winds arise!"

"The loves of childhood vanish,
Its golden dreams depart,
For the mighty work of Manhood
Demands an earnest heart;
The leaves, the blossoms, perish
When their early mission's o'er,
But the precious fruit remaineth
To swell ripe Autumn's store."

“Our friends, they gather round us,
They dwell with us awhile;
And we joy to hear their voices,
We live but in their smile;
Then they pass away like shadows
Which fade and are forgot;
And a blank and dreary desert
Is the earth where they are not!”

“Yes! with tears of bitter sorrow
In the tomb our friends we lay;
But we know the deathless spirit
Cannot slumber with its clay;
Each friend before us summoned
To join the seraph band,
Is a golden link that draws us
Towards a brighter, happier land!”

“Woe for the dark temptation,
The trial and the sin,—
For the dangers spread around us,
For the foes that lurk within;
Till the soul, like some frail vessel
Without a chart or sail,
Drifts on the rocky headlands,
Or founders in the gale!”

"Yes! sin is ever with us
Poor children of the dust,
Well may we shrink and tremble
If in ourselves we trust;
But the beacon fire burns brightest
When the heavy waters roll,
And He who seems to slumber
Will wake to guard the soul!"

Then I cried, "Oh, mystic voices!
Blend in one soothing strain,
Tell us, if Life be sorrowful,
Our tears flow not in vain.
The cup of joy is tempered
By drops of seeming ill,
But the darkest day of sorrow
Has some gleams of sunshine still!"





Requiem.

THEY pass us by, the friends, the dear companions,
Who shared our merry sports in days of yore;
And we, poor travellers to a far-off country,
Weakly and selfishly our loss deplore.

The day that brought the annual joyous meeting,
Is ushered in with sighs and many tears;
The strains of mirth, the words of idle jesting,
Like funeral knells, toll sadly in our ears.

We look around and miss the friendly faces,
All beautiful with kindness and truth;
We mourn the severed ties, the lost affections,
The withered flowers of our own joyous youth.



We think of them as in the graveyard lying,
Cold, cheerless, silent, far from all they love;
Having no part in all the busy tumult,
The cares, the pleasures, of the world above.

We think not of them in the realms of glory,
Where hopefully we trust their souls are flown;
From earthly sorrows freed, of errors shriven,
Making sweet music round the Eternal Throne.

Oh! did we know how idle and how fleeting
Our noblest works to them must now appear —
How dark our homes — how bright their new-found
dwelling,
E'en while we mourn — we would not wish them here.

Life's stormy wave is fraught with many dangers,
Grim rocks around, and perilous shoals before —
Why should we weep, when those we fondly cherished
Have reached the port, and dread the storms no more?





What are the Angels like?

WHAT are the Angels like, Mother?
The Angels pure and good,
Who dwell in the unapproachéd light
Of their own beatitude?

Are they like the flowers, the young fresh flowers,
That blossom around my way,
Filling the air with their odours sweet
On a balmy summer's day?

Not on the sunny slopes alone,
Or the river's mossy brim,
But down in the depths of the silent glades,
Where the light at noon is dim;



What are the Angels like?

111

Their bright eyes greet me at every step,
They smile on the loneliest spot,—
I cannot imagine a world of bliss
Where those sweet flowers are not.

For all things love them—the wandering bee,
And the gauze-winged dragon-fly,
And the bird that sings in the hazel tree,
Where he built his nest so high.

And the sunbeams love on their leaves to lie
All through the sultry day,
As if they were telling them tidings sweet
Of their sisters far away.

And yet I know when the winter comes,
And the trees are white with rime,
I shall look in vain for the lovely flowers
I culled in the summer time.

For the leaves and the blossoms beneath the snow
Lie buried in silence deep—
And the birds are mute—and the brooks are hushed
In their long and icy sleep.

What are the Angels like?

The Angels, you tell me, are with us still,
In our bright, in our gloomy hours;
They cannot change, and they cannot die—
Oh! they are not like the flowers!

What are the Angels like, Mother,
The Angels calm and bright,
Who walk through ages of happy hours,
In a realm of pure delight?

Are they like the stars, the quiet stars,
That gem the brow of heaven,
When the shadows fall, and the dew of sleep
To the weary earth is given?

I love to see them, one by one,
Peep trembling from on high,
So clear, so bright, so beautiful,
You may count them in the sky.

And then, as the crimson sun goes down,
And the darkness comes apace,
Till I feel my brother's hand in mine,
But I cannot see his face,—

What are the Angels like?

113

The heavens are then all full of stars,
And they seem, in very deed,
With their quenchless eyes that never tire,
My inmost thoughts to read.

I hear men speak of the planets' march
Through the swiftly rolling years —
Of the voices, the wondrous melody,
That comes from their radiant spheres.

And yet methinks to our dewy earth
The planets come not nigh;
And I cannot hear e'en the echoes faint
Of the music in the sky.

The Angels, you tell me, breathe gentle things
Through the captive's dungeon bars,
They speak to the sad ones, the young, the gay —
Oh, they are not like the stars!

What are the Angels like, Mother,
The Angels fair and mild,
Who leave their seats by the throne of God
To watch o'er a little child?

What are the Angels like?

Are they like the young, the beautiful,
Whom we know and love so well,—
Are they like the dear and the gentle friends
Who here on our own earth dwell?

I know thy heart, Mother! is with me still
When far in the woods I stray,
And the glance of thy watchful tenderness
Rests on me, the livelong day.

And when at evening, with folded hands,
I kneel by thy side alone,
Thy sweet voice joins in the solemn prayer,
And prompts my faltering tone;

I sleep, and I dream of gardens bright,
Filled with trees and flowers rare,
And of beautiful beings, a shining band
For ever wandering there;

Their robes are white as the early snow,
Their brows like the morning shine,
And their faces are all so beautiful,
And yet so like to thine!

What are the Angels like?

115

And if I wake with a sudden start
From that dream of fancied bliss,—
'Tis to meet the glance of thy loving eye,
And to feel thy gentle kiss;

And then, I know that glorious scene,
A dream it cannot be—
O Mother! the Angels God loveth best
Are surely like to thee!





The Gloaming.

THE rosy hues of sunset
Are fading from the sky,
The water lilies motionless
On the lake's clear surface lie,
And spectre-like across the earth
The length'ning shadows pass
In the gloaming, in the gloaming,
When the dew is on the grass.

The birds have sung their evening hymn,
The insect-wings are still,
The very breeze hath sunk to sleep
Upon the distant hill,
And the way-worn and the weary
Turn homeward one by one,
In the gloaming, in the gloaming,
When the toils of day are done.


The Gloaming.

117

There are lights and sounds of laughter
In the cheerful homestead now,
And the shades of daily cares depart
From each unclouded brow;
And dreams of hope, and joy, and love
Flit through the maiden's brain
In the gloaming, in the gloaming —
Ah! will those dreams remain?

There are melancholy musings
In the sad and lonely heart,
From whose cold eye the cloud of grief
Will never more depart —
Faces and tones of other days
Are gathering thick and fast;—
In the gloaming, in the gloaming
Throng the shadows of the past.

'Tis an old — old tale; — the sunny hopes
That ushered in our day,
Like rosy clouds at sunset hour,
Too often fade away;
And tears, unlike the summer dew,
Revive no withered flowers
In the gloaming, in the gloaming
Of this weary life of ours!







Dreams of the Past.

LIKE fleets upon the distant ocean,
Glittering spars and canvas white,
Sailing by, with dream-like motion,
In the cold moon's hazy light;
Like cloud shadows o'er the meadow,
Drifting in the sultry noon;—
Like the faint, yet haunting echo
Of a half forgotten tune;—

So, across my bosom stealing,
Shadows of the days that were,
Touch the inner chords of feeling,
Wake the tones that slumbered there.
Who shall say that Thought, decaying,
Yields to sluggish Time's control?
Wild, unshackled, dreaming, straying,
Thought is deathless as the soul!



Listening in the winter evenings
To the howling of the storm,—
Tracing pictures in the gleamings
Of the firelight soft and warm,—
Comes a sound of joyous laughter,
Rises many a fair young brow,—
Faces I shall see hereafter,—
Voices that are silent now!


Standing by the open window
On a balmy summer even,
Looking from the twilight shadow
Towards the countless orbs of heaven;—
Dimmer grows the scene, and dimmer,—
Green trees rise, and hills decline,
Branches wave, and moonbeams glimmer,
Round the home that once was mine.

Even now, my heart, with gladness
Of the present hour was stirred,
Felt no touch of coming sadness,
Bounded like a singing bird,—
But a look, a word half spoken,
Back the crowd of memory brings,
And the stillness round is broken
With the rustling of their wings.

Dreams of the Past.

Welcome are ye! Dearly welcome!
Beings of a higher sphere!
From the far land where ye dwell, come,
Fold your wings and linger here;
Grief no more can cloud your faces,
Death can never stain your brow,—
Lovely are your resting places—
Take me with you when ye go!

Voiceless phantoms! home returning
O'er a dim and distant track,
Sorrow do ye wake, and yearning
For the days that come not back;
Yet the heart ye fill with sorrow
Would not pray for thoughtless ease;
Would not buy a joyful morrow
With the loss of dreams like these.



The World of Beauty.

"THE world is but a mocking dream,
An arid waste and cold,
A scene of guilt or hopeless grief"—
Cried some faint heart of old;
And many, with such words, have sought
Their anguish to beguile,
And yet methinks, the evil dwelt
In their own soul the while.

They looked into its troubled depths,
And saw but sorrow there,
The tossings of tumultuous thought,
The sinkings of despair,—
As one who in a wintry pool
Sees many a leafless bough,
Nor stays to note the blessed rays
Of sunlight streaming through.

They saw no glory in the sun,
No beauty in the flower,
Nor joyed to feel the healthful breeze
At morning's dewy hour;
They loved not twilight's pensive gloom,
Nor evening's first-born star
Shedding its light serene and soft
O'er the blue hills afar;

And all across the sunny world
Whichever way they passed,
The gloomy thoughts that lurked within
Their own dark shadows cast;
In bitterness they threw aside
Life's heritage of mirth,
And gave harsh names of pain and wrong
Unto the glorious earth.

Our glorious earth! around our steps
She bids rich blessings fall,
And scatters, with a lavish hand,
Her treasures unto all;
Each day, each hour, each changing scene
For joy fresh theme supplies,—
The moss that clings around a stone,
The bow that spans the skies—

The meanest insect in the grass
We crush beneath our feet,
The proudest bird that singing, soars
The early morn to greet—
All breathe one song of hope and love,
Which did we hear aright,
No tears of grief or aching shame
Would ever dim our sight.



I too, at times, have turned away,
And foolishly have sighed
For scenes and hours of fancied bliss
That were in love denied;
And pined until my heart was faint,
And Hope herself grew dumb,
With grievings for the buried past
And dreams of days to come.

But ever when I looked abroad,
And felt the sunny glow,
And saw the smile the broad heavens sent
To the green earth below;
And ever when I heard the hum
Of voices in the air,
And thought of fields and waving woods,
And all things bright and fair—

The World of Beauty.

That glimpse of beauty to my heart
Did health and comfort bring;
And like the harp-notes played of yore
To Israel's gloomy King,
It drove away the spirits dark
Of grief and brooding care;
And beautiful and happy thoughts
Alone were treasured there.







Thy Will be Done.

Thy Will be done, O God! when faint with fear
My spirit shrinks at dread of future ill,
Thy hand hath led me on from year to year —
Be thou my Friend, my Guide, my Father still!

Too much I question of the days to be —
I murmur, sigh — Thou knowest what is best,
Teach me to place unfailing trust in Thee,
And in Thy changeless love securely rest!

While life is mine, oh! do not Thou forsake,
Thou who hast suffered, sorrowed, died for me —
Restore the wanderer to Thy fold, and make
Each thought, each feeling, subject unto Thee.



If the wild dreams that throng my soul have found
A resting place, an hour of mortal birth,—
Let not their bright links twine too closely round
My heart, and make it cleave too much to earth;—

But if my future path be cold and drear,
Since in Thy wisdom Thou ordainest so,—
When joys depart and sorrow's hour is near,
Teach me to bend in meekness to the blow;—

And when Death comes, then be Thou near to save,
Be Thou my pilot o'er that unknown sea,
And from the gloomy portals of the grave,
Lead me to dwell for evermore with Thee!



Fairy Gifts.

A GLEAM of sunshine came,
A ray of living flame,—
Rare visitant, within the darkened room
Where I, in silence deep,
Half waking, half in sleep,
Sat weaving pleasant fancies in the gloom.

Methought a bright-eyed fay,
A spirit young and gay,
In robes of light and glory, came to me;
And, hovering o'er my head,
In tones of music said,—
“Ask what thou wilt, thy wish shall granted be!”

Then in my breast there wrought
A tumult of wild thought —
My lips were parted, but with vain essay;
The flush was on my cheek,
The words I fain would speak
In low unfinished murmurs died away.

My wistful eyes before
Young Fancy spread a store
Of dreams and wishes, rare and fragile things!
All that fair Hope portrays
To gild the coming days,
All the heart's vain and fond imaginings.

Then like a cloistered nun,
Her solemn vigils done,
Pacing by moonlight towards her lonely cell,—
So Memory, calm and pale,
Drew back the brodered veil
From the deep caverns where her secrets dwell.

Old games we used to play
Through the bright summer day,
Till faded in the west the sunset's glow,—
Old faces, evermore
A look of love that wore,—
Old songs we listened to, long, long ago —

Legend of wood and wave,
 Gray rock and sparry cave,
 And ruined halls where sheeted spectres dwell;
 The magic wealth that lies
 In Arab palaces,
 By large-winged Genii guarded long and well;

The lofty marble halls
 Where the bright fountain falls,
 And captives listen, bound in charmed sleep,—
 The deeds of warriors bold
 Chieftains and knights of old,
 And daring rovers on the trackless deep—

Of haunted grove and vale,
 The wild fantastic tale
 I heard from thee so oft—O Friend long tried!
 For I methought once more
 As in the days of yore,
 In silent wonder, listened at thy side.

Listened and doubted nought,
 But gathered stores of thought
 To muse and marvel through long hours alone,
 Till my heart inly burned,
 And scarce mine eyes discerned
 The line that parts the dream-world from our own.

Alas! that vision fair,
Those palaces of air,
Temple and tower soon faded from my view;
And from the bright dream I
Woke, murmuring with a sigh,
"Give me the faith mine earlier childhood knew!"



We Journey on Together.

We journey on together,
Young children, blithe and gay,
As merry as the singing birds
That flit from spray to spray ;

With bursts of joyous laughter,
With carols loud and long,
We stoop to pluck the early flowers
As we gaily pass along.

Free-handed, open-hearted,
Our love with all we share ;
We have no doubts of coming days,
We give no thought to care ;

We Journey on Together.

For the bright world lies before us,
And bright the heavens above,
And the light that shines around our path
Is the light of hope and love.

We journey on together
In our wild and dreamy youth,
With all childhood's generous confidence
In goodness and in truth;

No fear, no sin, no sorrow,
Across our path hath come,
No clouds of doubt or discontent
Have dimmed the light of home.

And we greet our young companions
With sweet smiles, as heretofore,
And we talk,—but not so fearlessly,
So frankly as of yore;

For our wayward, restless spirits
Life's first great change have known,
And we better love to turn aside
To sit and muse alone.

We Journey on Together.

133

We journey on together
In our graver, sadder years,
When the eyes that once knew nought but smiles
Are sometimes dim with tears;

When we meet some early playmate,
'Tis with soft and serious tone
We speak of all-engrossing cares,—
We mourn our bright dreams flown.

It may be Earth's most precious things,—
Health, hope, and love are ours,
But we find the roses in our path
Have thorns as well as flowers;

And the leaves upon the bushes
Wear old Autumn's sober brown;
And the shadows on the lake's clear breast
At times steal o'er our own.

We journey on together,
But with weary steps and slow,
When long—long years upon our heads
Have left their touch of snow;

We Journey on Together.

The few who now remain to us
Like ourselves are frail and weak,
And low, and strange, and querulous
Are the words we often speak.

Time's hand lies heavy on our hearts,
Death's signet on our brow;—
The hopes once dear as Life itself
Are scarce remembered now;

And darker still and darker
The evening shadows fall,
And the onward path winds closer
To the churchyard's mossy wall.



The Letters of the Dead.

THE letters of the Dead! oh! guard them well,
Cherish the records of departed years,
Of warm fresh feelings, pure as morning's dew,
Of sunny joys that soon were quenched in tears;—
Of happy meetings and of sad farewells,
Of sweet and serious communings they tell,
Of brighter scenes than shall again be ours,
Of holier thoughts—oh, therefore guard them well!

It may be that their name to us was dear,
Dearer than aught we knew or hoped beside;
We treasured in our hearts their lightest tone,
Counted the hours that kept them from our side;—
Now it is past, the wild and fevered dream
Of earthly love—and these remain alone,
These fading characters, so fondly traced
By hands whose clasp no more shall meet our own!

Or it may be we judged them harshly once,
 Calling them weak, perchance, or changed, or cold,—
Withdrew our fingers from their friendly touch,
 And wrapped our hearts in pride's most icy fold;—
That too is past,—in self-accusing guise
 Each angry word, each wronging thought appears,
And bitter memories planted in our souls
 Are watered oft with penitential tears.

It may be too, that our sick hearts recall
 Actions and foolish words which caused them pain,
Kind looks, bright smiles, that met with no response,
 And mild remonstrances, oft urged in vain;—
Now, all too late! in agony of heart
 We long a few short years again to live,—
To pour our sorrows and our yearnings forth,—
 To hear them say, "We love and we forgive!"

Ah! little do we think, each idle word,—
 Each careless speech, so oft at random flung,—
The wild outpourings of the lightsome heart,
 The heedlessness of youth's too flippant tongue—
In after years, unbidden and unsought,—
 When no fond smile the ghost can exorcise,—
In the dark caverns of our soul shall wake
 To haunt us with their sad reproachful eyes!

The Letters of the Dead.

137

Ah! little do we think what slight returns
We make for so much pure and patient love,
For watchful care, for tenderness, and truth,—
Precious and rare all earthly things above;—
Not till the long grass on their graves looks green,
Not till the bloom of our own life is fled,
And by the once bright fireside, we alone
Are left, to weep o'er Letters of the Dead!





Little Things.

THERE was a brook, a little brook,
Went singing on its way,
'Neath bunches of the knotted grass
And boughs of alders gray.

It had no name of olden saint,
No dim and sparry grot,
Nor legend wild of woodland sprite,
To sanctify the spot.

No village maiden loitered there
Her rustic wreath to weave;
Nor poet strayed with dreamy brow
Beneath the trees at eve.



But when the rushes tall and slim
Sighed to it all day long,
It answered with a sparkling gleam,
A low and pleasant song.

It gave a mirror to the fern,—
That lady proud and fair
Who o'er its rippling surface flung
Her long bright waving hair;

And sometimes in the summer time
The breezes lightly played,
And glinting through the parted leaves
A roving sunbeam strayed;

And sometimes in the autumn nights,
From out the heavens afar,
Looked down into its tranquil depths
A single, silvery star.

There was a flower, a tiny flower,
That in the greenwood grew,
With velvet leaves so fresh and smooth,
And eyes of tenderest blue.

The Sage who for his herbal sought
All leaves and simples rare,
Culled many a neighbouring weed, and left
The lowly floweret there;

The village children in their walks
Oft passed it heedless by,
It had no radiant bloom, to tempt
The stranger's careless eye.

It sighed not at its lonely fate
Within the forest wild,
But ever to the grand old oaks
Looked up, and softly smiled.

Shyly it oped its trembling cup
To greet the honey-bee,—
It nodded to the sprightly dance
Of fairies on the lea;

It listened to the early birds,
It quaffed the evening dew,
And from the earth, and air, and sky,
New themes of gladness drew;

And when the yellow leaves fell thick,
And louder swelled the blast,
Folded its petals bright and calm
And smiling to the last.

There was a heart, a human heart
Unnoticed and unknown,
Deep buried in the dark recess
Of a vast, dingy town.

It boasted not of noble blood,
Of wealth's all-conquering power,
No gifts of Genius rich and rare,
Nor Beauty's glorious dower;

No harvest of renown it reaped,
No great achievement wrought;
But rich in all the charities
Of kindly deed and thought,

The heavy cross of daily life
So patiently it bare,
None ever guessed that grief or pain
Had found an entrance there.

Stern censures for another's sin
It was not wont to frame,
But gave a smile, a loving word
To every one who came.

And where it dwelt, all strifes were healed,
All foes were reconciled;—
The harshest nature of the earth
Grew gentle as a child

Beneath that gracious influence,
That all-prevailing power,
Soft as the murmur of the brook,
The perfume of the flower!

The wide world oped its treasure house
And proudly spread abroad
The loveliest gems that Nature gave,
To win the smile of God;—

And Man displayed his noblest gifts,
Wealth, Wisdom, Power, and Art—
But loveliest, in the sight of Heaven,
Was that poor human heart!

The Student.

A STUDENT sat on a summer morn
In his lonely room apart,
And through the casement a gleam of light
Came like the smile of some gentle sprite,—
It rested on volumes of wondrous lore
By sages written long years before —
On bust and picture, on spear and shield,
The spoils of some distant battle field —
And gems from the earth's deep heart;—
All that the world holds rich and rare
Of wealth or wisdom was gathered there.

'Twas a pleasant scene, but the Master sat
As one with grief o'erworn,
And his eye had a glance of wrathful pride
And his brow a shade of scorn,

The Student.

For one he had loved and trusted long
Had done to the Student grievous wrong.
And he sighed as he wrote :

“All love and truth
Have faded long since with the earth's bright
youth,

And darker and deeper the sable pall
Of sin and shame on our race doth fall —
Folly and treason and error's wild dream,
These of all sages have been the theme

Since ever the world began ;—
Let future ages the work resume,
Till this orb be whelmed in its final doom,
They shall not paint half the grief and
gloom
That lurk in the heart of man !”

And he flung down the pen, and on his hand
His brow awhile he laid,
And he sighed again with the bitter pain
Of a noble heart betrayed —

“I have sat too long with my books alone,
They have given my spirit too sad a tone —
All creatures abroad are glad and free,
I will go forth into the fields, and see

The vernal beauty of flower and tree,
And list to the birds' sweet strain;
Who knows but Nature may smile on me,
And teach me to smile again?"


Through flowery meadows the pathway wound
The base of a ruined tower around;
"Lonely it stands in its last decay,
The crowds who once filled it have passed away,
And the faithless ivy remains alone
To laugh at the ruin it feedeth upon!"
Nearer he came, and he saw with shame
That the fragments all rent and aslant
By wind and weather were bound together
By the twine of that faithful plant.
Then he passed by a scathed and leafless tree
Standing upright on the sunny lea.
"That ghastly spectre! what doth it here,
In the midst of gladness, all withered and sere,
Mocking the earth and the laughing sky
Like a thing of death at a feast of joy!"
But lo! in the clefts of the hollow trunk
The wild birds had reared their young,
And sweet on the wings of the summer breeze
Came the notes that they blithely sung.

Silently musing, with footstep slow,
The Student climbed to the mountain's brow,
Barren it seemed to him, bleak and wild,
And the wind blew keen and cold,
But a few bright flowers looked up and smiled
From their lowly bed of mould;
And he saw how the poorest and loneliest sod
Keeps yet some trace of the smile of God.

Back to his dwelling the Student turned,
A grave and an altered man,
And there rose the penitent flush of shame
To his cheek so pale and wan.
The ink was scarce dry on the morning's page,
And his tears fell warm and fast,
For the passionate tempest of grief and rage
From his chastened soul had passed;
And a light, as from heaven, his pure brow wore,
As he sat down in silence to write once more.

"Shall the penitent rise from his bended knee,
And cry that another is worse than he?
Shall the worm that crawlth in doubt and fear,
So harshly judge of its brethren near?
Sternly we speak of the outward sin,
And reck nought of the faith that may dwell within;

In hearts which to us appear hard and cold,
The eye of an angel much good may behold,
For the meanest and vilest hath yet some trace
Of pristine beauty, of love and grace,
Brought by the soul from her dwelling-place.
Meekly, O Christian! forbear to scan
The throbbing heart of thy fellow-man,
For He, and only He,
Whose eyes without cloud or error look
On each blotted page of that clasped book,
Thy brother's Judge should be!"





A Town Vigil.

WHEN the sun is set, and the dark night
Draws near with footsteps slow,
I love to look forth on the many lights
That are flitting to and fro,
In the homes where the bright fire sendeth out
A warm and ruddy glow.

And as I gaze, a Spirit
Comes and takes me by the hand,
And calls up pictures of light and gloom,
With his voice of high command,
And draws the veil from a thousand homes
With his strong though unseen hand.

He flies o'er the silent city,
In whose many casements bide
Sorrow and gladness, and pain and grief,
And meekness and sullen pride,
And gives me to look on the throbbing hearts
That dwell in the world so wide.

In one home I see the children
Through the twilight's deepening gloom,
Listening in silence, half pleased, half scared,
To some tale of dread and doom,
Or bounding away, with a merry laugh,
Through the closely curtained room.

Then the noise is hushed, and a sound is heard
Of footfalls on the stair,
And the little hands are folded close,
And the lips breathe a simple prayer;
And pure as the blush of the early dawn
Is the look those young faces wear.

And I see the gentle Mother
In the silence calm and deep,
Watching with eyes of tenderest love
Their softly cradled sleep,
And shedding those tears which in hours of joy
Earth's holiest natures weep.

'Tis the fairest, the loveliest picture
Earth can shew to the worlds above,
The rosy infant slumbering there
As soft as the nestling dove,
And the mother breathing sweet prayers to heaven
From her home of peace and love.

In another a conflict rages
That well might daunt the brave,
A brow by Pain's burning fingers worn
Bears the impress of the grave,
And tears are falling, falling fast
O'er one whom they cannot save;

And I hear the sobbing whisper,
And the slow and cautious tread,
And the prayer that bursts from the breaking heart
When the hour of hope is fled,
And the kisses poured on the stony lips
Of the all-unconscious dead.

I note the bitter sorrow
In that gloomy house of woe,
Shut out from the stir of life around
And the sunshine's golden glow,
One lonely dwelling, one silent spot
In the busy world below,—

The sorrow that rankles the heart within,
As days roll on apace,
Ever, at morn, and noon and eve
To look on one vacant place,
To miss one sweet voice from the household prayer,
From the hearth one well-known face!

And now, 'tis a gentle maiden
With eyes undimmed by care,
Clad in a robe of floating snow,
Herself as young and fair
As the garlands of blushing flowers she twines
In her dark and glossy hair;

And I follow her through the lighted halls
Where she moves in her beauty now,
Shedding around her a halo bright
Of love from her fair young brow,
Like the moon that glides from the courts of heaven
To smile on the seas below.

And now, 'tis a lonely Student
Through the night of pain and care,
Toiling far down in the mines of Thought
For its gems and treasures rare,
And looking up to the stars of heaven
Which alone shine on him there;

Bravely his task fulfilling
In the midst of wrong and blame,
Toiling for those who heap words of scorn
On his life and his noble name,
And looking beyond with his eagle eye
To a future of deathless fame!

Many a tale that Spirit
In the darkness tells to me,
Many a scene doth his hand reveal
Of want and misery,
And pining care, in this sunny world
Where nought but joy should be.

All the voiceless anguish
That dwells in the halls of state,—
The dread, and the grief, and the grinding toil
In the crowded streets that wait,
Where the beggar in Poverty's tattered garb
Lies close to the rich man's gate.

The wail of the soul, lamenting
Long years of thoughtless sin,
The noise of the busy feet without,
And the revel's joyous din,
Mocking the weary and fainting hearts
That are breaking unheard within!

Till I ask, as I turn from the window
In a sad despondent mood,
“Is this the same earth on whose stainless breast
The radiant angels stood,
When the great Creator his work surveyed,
And saw that the whole was good?”



Oh! there are many mysteries
Shrouded for us in night,—
There are secret workings, in wisdom veiled
From our weak distempered sight,
Lessons of patience, and faith and hope,
Which we never can read aright;

But this we know,—when a human heart
Is tortured with pain and care,
Yet rouses itself in a Christian's strength
To grapple with dark despair,—
An Angel of God, on wings of love,
Unseen is hovering there!



Reveillée.

SOUND the loud clarion,—sound!
Warrior! arise from thy couch of rest,
And gird the cuirass upon thy breast,
Take thy good shield, and with arm of might
Unsheath the falchion that glitters bright,—
Dream not of home and its thousand joys,
Of thy mother's smile, of thy sister's voice;
Bid each gentler thought from thy breast depart,
Go forth in the strength of a dauntless heart,
And God be with thee! thy friends are few,
And mighty and fierce is the hostile crew,
No pause in the desperate strife may be,
No truce, no parley, 'twixt them and thee!
In pride and power on either hand,
They crowd, they threaten, that evil band;
Yet fear not—though peril and harm befall,
A constant spirit will vanquish all,



And glorious and great the prize shall be
In the hour of triumph awarded thee!
And if in the battle thy strength decay,
If false friends steal from thy side away,
If thine eye grow dim, and thine arm be slack,
And the light forsake thee — oh! turn not back!
’Twere better to struggle in silence on,
Though the Angel of Hope from thy side be gone,—
’Twere better, when none are near to save,
To perish as best beseems the brave,
And to win for thy guerdon a warrior’s grave
On the crimson battle ground!

Sing to the soft lute, sing!
O child of genius! ’tis thine the power
To shed a bright gleam o’er each silent hour,
To twine fair flowers in Joy’s festive wreath,
To hallow the dark days of Sorrow and Death,
To bring soothing tears to the downcast eye,
To lead the soul towards its home on high!
Many and great are the spells that belong
To each flute-like tone of the voice of song.
Oft, when the code of the moralist fails,
The musical voice of the bard prevails,*

* “A verse may find him who a sermon flies.”—GEORGE HERBERT.

And the heart that was hardened by wrong and pain,
Melts at the sound of its first loved strain;
Say not the glory of earth is flown,
And faded the treasures that once seemed her own,
That the wings of Time, as he speeds along,
Efface from the dark world the gleams of song,
And the sweet romance and the soothing rhyme
Are gone with the dreams of the olden time!
Ah no! in the woods, in the glowing sky,
In the voice of the lark as it floateth by,
In the star that gleams on the quiet lake,
In the flower that blooms from the dusky brake,
In the earthly households where love should be,
In thine own full heart,—there are themes for thee!
And if when thou pourest sweet numbers forth,
Thou think'st upon Him who first gave them birth,
If thy thoughts, as they spring up, in joy elate,
To His service be hallowed and consecrate—
Then all shall revere thee, then all shall prize
The musical strains from thy heart that rise,
Pure as the flowers of Paradise,
And strong as an angel's wing!

Rise from thy slumbers, rise!
O Christian man! there is work to be done,
Grief to be comforted, souls to be won,
There are wanderers tossed on Life's stormy wave
Who call on thee, Brother! to hear and to save!



Not thine is the hero's arm, not thine
The melody breathed by the bard divine,—
But God gives to each for his own short hour
An aim and a mission of love or power;
To one, the spirit that awes mankind
And rules the whole world with its master mind;
To another, a voice like a streamlet lone,
Soothing the earth with its whispering tone.
Say not thy mission is low or small,
The eye of God resteth alike on all,
And He loveth better the voice of love
And the gentle glance of the brooding dove,
Than the proud keen eye of the bird that flies
Scorning the earth for the brighter skies.
Whisper sweet words in the ear of Care,
Give to all freely thy love, thy prayer,
Give of the riches which God hath given,
Be they freely spent in the cause of Heaven,—
Give of thy time, of the golden day
That lights thy glad soul on her upward way,—
Give of thy talents, that glorious dower
Of the strong, skilful hand, of the mind's chainless
power,—
And ask nought from earth, — then around thy
home
The blessing of God shall in soft dews come;
And when Life's trials and joys but seem
Like the echoes of some long-forgotten dream,

When thou goest forth on the awful track
Whence a mortal footstep can come not back —
Then the good thou hast spoken, the love thou
 hast wrought,
Each gentle action, each kindly thought,
A crown of Heaven's brightest stars, shall be
 brought
To greet thee in the skies!



My Books.

I HAVE a world, a sunny world where I at will can
 roam
And commune with the spirits fair that make therein
 their home ;
An instrument, whose mighty chords, in hours of
 solitude,
Gives forth sweet music, grave or glad, to suit each
 varying mood ;—
A treasure unto me bequeathed by master minds of
 yore
And stored in many a cherished book of light or serious
 lore,
A long array of changeless friends, who speak in
 whispers low,
A magic glass, whereon sweet thoughts, like phantoms,
 come and go.



I turn to one, and straight there comes a sound of
Sabbath chimes,
And a pleasant murmur of the breeze amid the bowering
limes,
A gleam of rivers as beneath the dark pine woods they glide,
An echo of the shepherd's song from the green hill's
distant side,
A breath of odours faint and sweet, from the violet
dingles borne,
A glimpse of sunny harvest fields, and of reapers 'mid
the corn,
Of village belfries old and gray, of quiet sylvan bowers,
And cottage gardens neat and trim, and rich in bees
and flowers.

Another hath a louder note—'tis the bugle's echoing blast,
The watchfires blaze, the bells ring out, the troops are
gathering fast!
The thunder of the cannonade and the rallying shout I hear,
And the fiery charge of cavalry, and the clash of shield
and spear.
I see the lonely sentinel as he paceth to and fro,
I see the leaguered citadel hurl defiance at her foe,
And I feel the blood mount to my brow, I feel my heart
beat high,
And it bounds unto the stirring sound of the squadrons
hurrying by.

And now, it is the gloomy nave of minster vast and lone,
With stalls and screen of carved oak, and aisles of
pillared stone ;
Apostles old, and martyred saints, look down from every
niche,
And Gothic windows lend the light a colouring quaint
and rich ;
And amid the old Crusaders' tombs, in reverent guise
and slow,
With censers and with cross of gold, the long processions go,
And a thousand silent worshippers kneel prostrate on the
ground,
And the lamps are lit, and the old walls rock to the
organ's pealing sound.


Or a long and stately avenue of elms and chesnuts tall,
Leads to the battlemented porch of an old historic hall,
A stag bounds from a coppice paved with heath and
spreading fern,
Where a fountain, with a dreamy sound, wells from its
hidden urn ;—
Or a ruined castle, lonely now, time-honoured, ivy-crowned,
Repeats its tale of splendours past to the listening oaks
around,
Grows garrulous of martial feats, of joust and gallant show,
And knights whose prowess filled the earth some thousand
years ago !

And now it is a long expanse of smooth and golden sands,
In the shadow of the beetling cliff the fisher's cottage stands,
And in and out the lines of rock that guard the storm-
beat shore,
The foaming waters glide and swell, and murmur evermore.
Strange legends doth the ocean tell, with voice that never
tires,
Filling perforce the longing soul with dreams and vague
desires,—
Dreams to whose soft yet potent sway that voice accordeth
well—
Dreams that the young heart cherishes, but never cares
to tell!

And these—oh! these have borne me back to a bright
and distant day,
A day of light and love and joy in a sweet home far
away.
And once again a happy child, with spirit glad and free,
I revel in the present hour, nor dream of what may be.
The tales I heard in early years, of ghost and mountain
sprite,
Or conned oftentimes with eager eyes by the fire's flickering
light.
The lessons that I flung aside, when I darted forth to play
Mid the sunshine and the singing birds, through half a
summer's day,—

'The book that by the couch of pain in after years I read,
When heart was faint, and eyes were dim with the weight
of tears unshed,
The verse breathed by some gentle voice whose earthly
song is o'er,
The page turned by a loving hand that clasps mine
nevermore,—
Oh! these are holy, holy things! they fill my silent room
With a host of crowded phantoms raised from Memory's
lonely tomb,—
Phantoms whose touch affrights me not, whose voice makes
no dismay,
But a longing wish to close mine eyes, and to pass with
them away!







Star-gazing.

BEAUTIFUL watchers, from twilight till dawn,
Heralding gladly the young smiling Morn,
Gems undimmed sparkling through Night's ebon veil,
Watch-lights whose lustre can fade not nor fail,
Types of the sweet thoughts that visit and bless
The soul in her dark hours of doubt and distress,
Oh! with what raptures of love and delight
In our long weary vigils we welcome your light!

What are ye? Kings throned in mansions of gold,
Ruling the universe centuries old?
Ensigns of glory and power unfurled
To daunt the shy glance of each far prostrate world?
Lyres of bright silver, to whom it is given
To pour gentle strains thro' the broad courts of Heaven?
Chariots of fire, rolled swiftly and loud
O'er a pavement alternate of sunshine and cloud?



Worlds moving gladly your orbits within,
The homes of bright races untainted by sin,
Homes where no shadow of evil, nor stain
Of sorrow or suffering, ever hath lain?
Seraphim such as the Prophet of yore
The Throne in the Temple saw hovering before,
With crowns of bright glory and swift waving wings,
To obey the behest of the great King of Kings?

Glad was the hymn that, your courses among,
In the jubilant morn of Creation ye sung;
Bright are the glances that ever since then
From your thrones ye have cast upon frail erring men;
The Prophet hath welcomed you while in his brain
The echo yet floated of Heaven's sweet strain,—
The Patriarch kindling his altar's dim light
To commune with God thro' the watches of night,—

The hunter besought you his footsteps to guide
When he tracked his wild prey in the hour of his pride—
The conqueror turned from your beauty to greet
The world's jewelled diadem laid at his feet—
Saw ye not the strong arm that in silence afar
Forged the chain of the captive, the weapons of war?
Heard ye not the first lyre of silvery tone
Whose faint earthly melody echoed your own?

And men to your bright lights have given a name
Of beauty and honour, of power and fame,
Have sought in your motions their future to trace,
As if Earth's fleeting histories could there find a place!
What marvel if turning from Faith's beaten way,
The thoughts of their fond hearts have led them astray,
Till, dazzled by earth-lights that wildering shine,
They gazed on your beauty and called you divine?

The soldier at watch on some dark battle ground,
With the foemen before him, the camp fires around;
The sage, gazing upwards to let the breeze blow
In the cool holy night o'er his thought-furrowed brow;
The monk in his vigil of sorrow and pain—
The captive fast bound with the cold, galling chain;
The toil-weary artisan, joying to share
A brief blessed respite from labour and care;—

The mariner tossed on the wild stormy wave,
With no sweet voice to cheer him, no strong arm to save;
Or praying in vain for the warm welcome light
Through the thick cheerless gloom of the long Arctic night;
The traveller, toiling for man and for God
In the wild distant lands where few footsteps have trod,
And pining, how often! mid danger and gloom,
For the faces he left in the dear land of home;

The rich man at ease his proud palace within —
The poor crouching humbly his favours to win ;
The young and the happy, for whom Life yet wears
A brow crowned with flowers, unsullied by tears ;
The mourner who dwells amid thousands alone ;
To sigh for a sweet voice whose music is flown,
To shrink from the future, to grieve o'er the past,
Till death bring the weary one comfort at last ;

All this have ye seen from your watch-towers above,
Looking down on earth's tumult of sorrow and love,
Cold, changeless, and calm, as the rocks at whose feet
With a vain wailing murmur the rough surges beat,
As the mountain that bends not when tempests sweep by,—
As the moon treading ever her course through the sky,
Smiling ye look on our grief and our pain,
And ye hear, and ye give back no answer again !

Ye give back no answer? Oh ! once from afar
There shone at deep midnight a beautiful star,
And a choir of sweet voices from heaven above
Proclaimed the glad tidings of peace and of love,
To shepherds who tended their flocks on the plain —
To sages who long watched the planets in vain,—
And they cast all their dreams and their labours aside
To follow the course of their glorious guide.

It passed by the palace of splendour and state
Where the King and his minions in dark conclave sate,
It passed by the Temple, the hallowed of old,
Where the High Priest alone walked in vestments of gold,
And it paused o'er a manger, mean, lowly, and bare,
But the Lord of the Throne and the Altar lay there,
And the wise men knelt down in their meekness, and piled
Rich gifts at the feet of the heaven-born Child.

The ploughshare hath passed o'er the Temple of God,
Where the palace once rose, long the heathen have trod;
And the proud sons of Judah, oppressed and reviled,
From the fair land of Promise have long been exiled.
But the glad tidings brought by the Angels' sweet song
Through the earth's farthest regions were wafted ere long,
And Earth's noblest children, the wise and the bold,
Pray to tread in the steps of the Shepherds of old.

The Star hath departed, no more from on high
It flashes, a symbol of hope, in the sky;
But ye, gentle sister-hood!—still ye retain
Some rays of that glory, some notes of that strain;
Through the long lapse of ages ye lovingly speak
Of rest to the weary, of strength to the weak.
Beautiful Watchers! with love and delight
Through Life's long dreary vigils we welcome your light!

24th December, 1856.







New Year's Eve.

WITH his mantle torn and travel-stained, his grey hair
bound with holly,
The Old Year on the threshold stands, as one in haste
to go;
And a thousand thoughts of bygone days, of joy and
melancholy,
Rise, flitting o'er my silent soul, like shadows o'er the
snow.

Sit down, sit down, departing Year! let us talk awhile
together
Of the long array of motley hours which are now for
ever flown—
Of the shadows and the sunshine—of the bright and
stormy weather—
Of the laughter and the bitter tears—which thou and
I have known.



Of the warm bright summer that to me brought fear and
sorrow only,
In a sister's sick-room watching for many a heavy
day,—
Of the hours that passed so wearily, so lagging, and so
lonely,
When heavily upon my life the cloud of darkness
lay.

The dear books closed, the pleasant tasks laid by with
silent grieving—
Some never more to quiet hours to lend their calm
delight;
The days and weeks that rolled away, no trace behind
them leaving,
The prison windows closely shut from each ray of
sunny light!

Nay! hast thou not some better theme for such a night as
this is?
Some merrier tale my heart to cheer, as the fire burns
dim and low?
Some retrospect of pleasant scenes, of happy thoughts,
and blisses,
For whose dear sake my voice may bless the Old Year
ere he go?

Call back a vision of warm hearts, bright smiles and
blooming faces,
An echo of the tones I love in my inmost soul to
keep —
Flowers from fragrant Paradise strewn on Earth's most
desert places,
Blessings showered by the hand of God on Life's
pathway rough and steep.

Love hushing Pain's wild murmurings — brave thoughts
with Sorrow wrestling —
Dreams that from golden Fairyland came bright'ning
all the air —
And fond hopes in the secret cell of my heart that there
lay nestling
Like birds among the summer leaves — will they
dwell for ever there?

My heart to-night is heavy, it is full of boding
sadness,
All the pictures I have conjured up wear a shadow
dark and strange,
And the melodies Hope warbles forth, rich bursts of love
and gladness,
Sink to a sudden dissonance of weariness and
change.

It is not in the outer world, with its ever-young
romances,
But deep within my own full heart, the change lies
there, I know;
It hath lost much of its early glee, of its bright, thick-
crowding fancies—
Is it better, wiser than it was?—I dare not deem
it so!

For Memory brings to light a throng of words unkindly
spoken,
Of thoughts which grovelling clung to earth when
they should have soared on high,
Of lowly duties unfulfilled, of high resolves oft
broken,
And of solemn counsel soon forgot, or wantonly
thrown by.

Oh! let me wash them from thy page with these tears of
deep emotion!
Let me write a fairer record there!—But the prayer,
I know, is vain;
The stream rolls onward silently to the dark and distant
ocean,
And the hour that passes unredeemed returneth not
again,



New Year's Eve.

173

When, with mantle torn and travel-stained, his grey hair
bound with holly,
The Old Year from the threshold turns, as one in haste
to go,
And a thousand thoughts of bygone days, of joy and
melancholy,
Rise, flitting o'er my silent soul, like spectres o'er the
snow !

1856.







The Launch of the "Duncan Dunbar."

A CHEER to greet the gallant ship, on this bright May
morn set free,
To seek a new path o'er the waters wide, where her home
shall henceforth be!
For she beareth a name to all endeared, by kindly word
and deed,
And a thousand voices their tones will blend, to bid the
good ship speed.

Not to our English shores alone doth the love of that
name belong,
But far away in the sunny climes, where her sails may
wave ere long;
She will gladden many a friendly heart, when she comes
o'er the salt sea's foam,
Like the notes of a melody wafted o'er, from the distant
land of Home.



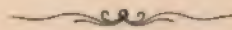
The Launch of the "Duncan Dunbar." 175

Not like the heroes of olden time, with banner and spear
 she goes
In the march of triumphant victory, o'er the necks of her
 prostrate foes,
But strong and calm on her mission of peace, with words
 of priceless worth,
Another link in the golden chain that girdles the mighty
 earth!

And well we know that, if need should be, when the
 storm is raging high,
When the dark days come and the winds are loud, and no
 human aid is nigh,
A gallant band on her deck shall stand, and nobly bear
 their part
In the strength oft tried, and the fearless faith, of the true
 old English heart!

God's blessing be with her, wherever she goes o'er the
 waste of waters dark,
With her precious freight of human lives — God speed
 her, the noble bark!
Be her white sails ever the messengers of joy and peace
 afar,
And may young and old breathe a benison on the name of
 the "Duncan Dunbar!"

25th May, 1857.







A Seed was by the Storm Wind Blown.

A SEED was by the storm wind blown
Far from its parent flower.
To a dark copse, remote and lone.
In deepest forest bower :

Long grasses clothed the rugged bank
Where weeds and brambles grew ;
And spreading fern and hemlock rank
The sun looked seldom through.

And there for many weeks it lay
In silence like to death.
It felt the Autumn's chill decay.
The Winter's icy breath :



A Seed was by the Storm Wind Blown. 177

Till summer came with changeful mood
Of sunshine and of shower;
And lo! amid the solitude
There bloomed a fairy flower!

A word was breathed in converse sweet,
A word of hope and power
And loving faith—an utterance meet
For Evening's hallowed hour;

It fell upon a heart downcast,
And racked with doubt and pain,
Unheeded, as the drops that fast
Fall on the stormy main;

And through long nights of dark unrest
And days of gloomy care,
Sank deep into the troubled breast,
And woke fresh courage there;

And, nourishing each thought sublime,
When brighter days were given
Brought forth, in God's appointed time,
A harvest ripe for Heaven.

Old Legends.

THE legends of the olden time! prize well each blotted
page
Which tells of human hopes and fears in a simpler,
holier age —
Of Saints who won the green palm branch and the
martyr's robe of white —
Of Christian hearts that manfully pressed forward towards
the light.
And if at times that light were dimmed by Error's misty
gloom,
Or tinted with the changing hues of Fancy's gaudy
plume,
Still much remains to bid us learn how holy, pure
and true
Were the zealous love, the fervent faith, our guileless
fathers knew.

Ay! prize them for the sake of those to whom their
words have given
A comfort, and a peace of heart which surely came from
Heaven;
Old monks have penned them painfully by the taper's
waning light;
They shed a glory round the cell of the lonely Eremite;
They stirred the souls of rugged men in the Baron's
feudal tower,
When the minstrel sang them to his harp in the quiet
evening hour;
And noble hearts from them have learnt high thoughts
and valiant deed,
Strength for the battle's stormy din, and Faith for life's
last need.

To us, as from a marble tomb, with grave and earnest tone,
They speak of toils and triumphs wrought by natures like
our own;
And well for us it surely were, could we listen to
their speech,
And reverently with docile hearts receive the words
they teach;
For every leaf and blade of grass within the greenwood
bowers,
And every tree and every stream in this bright world of ours,
As symbols of far loftier things to our rapt gaze would shine,
As dim mysterious echoes sound, of the Harmony Divine!

A thousand lessons should we learn in Nature's quiet school,
Should guide our wildly swelling hearts with firm and patient
rule,

And when the seas with human wrecks strew Life's storm-
beaten shore,

Look from them to the silent stars and the calm skies
evermore ;

And the sorrows and the sufferings from which no life is free,
The strivings and the perils dire, to our pure souls should be
Like the flames around the iron stake, whose red and angry
glare

Turned into roses fresh and sweet at the Christian maiden's
prayer.

Our hearts are weak and sorrowful ; we go blindly groping on
Like wanderers o'er a desert wild whose guiding star is gone,
And yearning in our weariness 'neath our load of care
and sin,

For something peaceful, true, and deep, to fill the void within ;
Till, like the giant Christopher, in the dark and lone midnight
We hear the Child-voice calling us, in its sweetness infinite,
And, casting off the heavy shroud of doubt and pale despair,
Go forth upon the stormy waves, and find a blessing there.

The Dying Painter.

It is recorded of the painter LUCAS, of Leyden, that the day before his death, he caused himself to be carried into his garden, that he might look, for the last time, on the face of nature.

A LITTLE closer to the garden wall,
With moss encrusted and with lichens gray,
Where the cool shadows of the aspens fall,
Chequered with sunbeams, on the flowery way,
I hear the village children as they call
To their young comrades in the fields at play,—
The wild birds piping in the wooded dell,
And the far chiming of the Convent bell.

How beautiful is Earth! I could not lie
From morn to eve within the darkened room,
And know that there was glory in the sky,
And life on earth, and joyousness, and bloom;
Faintly and tenderly the breeze's sigh
Wafts o'er my cheek the rose's rich perfume;
Nature in all her pomp, serene and mild,
Smiles a last farewell to her dying child.

Death to the old man comes, with grateful balm
Hushing the murmurs of his life-long pain,
With the low breathings of a funeral psalm
Chasing the phantoms of his heated brain,—
An awful Presence! yet serene and calm,
Knitting the links of Friendship's broken chain —
But I,—no tears have dimmed my glazing eye,
No grief hath scared my soul, yet I must die!

Oh! I, methinks, would be content to part
With life, and all that makes life dear and sweet,
My soul's rich dower, the glorious world of Art
Where I have wandered long with willing feet,—
Could I but whisper to my fainting heart
That the great task of life is now complete,
And to my land bequeath with my last breath
A name whose glory shall not taste of death.

But now — ah me! it is a fearful thing
To die when Hope's rich cup is mantling high,
When Thought soars upward, as on skylark's wing,
Through the blue regions of Immensity.
No discord yet hath jarred the lute's soft string,
No leaden cloud obscured the noonday sky,
And Love and Fame their choicest garlands shed
O'er the bright path that I no more shall tread.

To feel the clear glad waves of Fancy gushing
From their exhaustless fountain pure and deep—
To see bright shapes on rainbow-pinions rushing
Through the wide portals of my haunted sleep—
To wake, ere morn in the gray east is blushing,
In weariness and pain,—and then to weep
That the dim eye and chilly hand no more
The soul's rich dreams can picture, as of yore!

This have I felt: and Death itself were far
Less terrible than agonies like these;
In the glad morn, beneath Eve's pensive star,
Oft have I prayed the bitter strife might cease;
And yesternight sweet visions from afar,
Angelic voices whispered words of peace;
And now my spirit, through the golden air,
Surveys the heaven, and feels her home is there!

There, with the good and great of olden time,
Sceptred and crowned, a bright and joyful throng—
There, with the martyr'd saints of every clime
Whose tuneful voices swell the angelic song,—
And the Madonna, throned in pomp sublime,
For ever smiling and for ever young,—
Mild, beautiful, as when her soft glance fell
On the rapt Painter in his cloistered cell!

And yet, Earth's spell is on me! as I gaze
On the bright, glowing world whence I depart—
The quiet nooks, the green and pleasant ways,
The peaceful home, so dear unto my heart—
Oh! linger yet awhile—the sun delays
His westward course—and if the warm tears start,
Nay! chide me not, sweet friends! ye cannot know
The spirit's strife, that longs, yet fears to go!

Soon o'er my head the churchyard grass shall wave,
And the wee birds unconscious requiems sing,
And the wild flowers above my early grave
Shed their young sweetness in the joyous Spring.
Ye whose kind looks and gentle thoughts I crave,
Thither sometimes your fond remembrance bring,
Kneel by that tomb, and breathe a loving prayer
For him, the early-called, who sleeps in silence there!

The Death-watch.

THE Finlanders imagine that when a person is dangerously ill, the dead are calling him to join them; all the sick man's friends assemble round him, and entreat him to remain among them. Should he recover, it is owing entirely to their entreaties; if he die, it is because the voices of the dead prevail.

Oh, weary, weary watching!

There is sorrow on the sea,

The wail of anguish blending

With sweetest minstrelsy;

Around a lowly death-bed,

With sob and chanted prayer,

Pale mourners strive to waken

The silent sleeper there.

“O Friend!” they cry, “O Brother!

In the happy days of yore

Thou hast joyed to hear our voices,—

Wilt thou heed them nevermore?

Thou hast shared our toils and dangers

On the wild and howling sea,—

When our bark flies o’er the billow

Must we look in vain for thee?

The Death-watch.

“Thou hast trod with us the pathway
O'er the mountain's snowy brow,
Thou hast tracked with us the quarry
'Neath the dark pine's rustling bough ;—
By all the love and gladness
That cheered our lonely lot,—
By the tears we all have mingled,
O Brother! leave us not.

“By the beauty and the splendour
Of the long, long Arctic night,
When all round the billowy snow-drifts
Lie spectral cold and white,
And the stars shine forth in glory
Like beacon-fires on high,
And the arrowy Northern streamers
Go flashing through the sky ;—

“By the frank and cordial greetings,
And the sound of household mirth,
And the gay light-hearted meetings
Around the blazing hearth,
The child's soft hand caressing,
The matron's placid brow,
The old man's whispered blessing.—
Oh, do not leave us now!”

What stirs the pallid sleeper?
Will he smile on us again?
No! a music richer, deeper,
Is floating through his brain;
Voices of sweetness breathing
Of another, holier sphere,—
White wings around him rustling
Which none but he can hear;—

And he sees them in their beauty,
The loved, the early dead,
Robes of brightness, crowns of glory
Upon each sainted head.
What sing they? Ah, what sing they,
The freed from pain and sin,
Of the fair, the many mansions
Where sorrow comes not in?

Homes, whose sweet music dies not
In a dull funereal knell,—
Lips, that in anguish breathe not
Life's saddest word, Farewell!—
Eyes, whose long silken lashes
With tears are never wet,—
Brows, that no more are clouded
With shades of fond regret,—

The Death-watch.

Hearts, whose quick warm impulses
By no harsh words are chilled,
Whose days of toil are ended,
Whose dreams of rest fulfilled,—
Hopes, that can never languish,—
Old friendships knit anew,—
And love, serenest, purer,
Than ever childhood knew!

What marvel, if that story
Lent his cheek a moment's glow—
If a ray of Heaven's glory
Stole o'er his cold white brow—
Till the mourners, wistful gazing
On each sign of fear and pain,
Ceased awhile their dreary moaning,
And dared to hope again?

There came a golden sunbeam
Through the partly opened door—
A shadow of the glory
Those young immortals wore;
Or did the new-born Angel,
Ere he rose upon the wind,
Shed one smile of love and blessing
On the dear ones left behind?

The Death-watch.

189



A wail is on the ocean,
A voice of fear and woe,
Death within a human dwelling
Hath laid a loved head low;—
And the sailor checks his carol
Where the flashing billows roll,
And breathes a prayer for mercy
To the swiftly passing soul.

The loved one hath departed
From the home that once was his—
Oh! foolish and faint-hearted
To murmur at his bliss—
To dream that earthly voices,
Though love were in the strain,
Could lure a new freed spirit
To its prison-house again!



A Glimpse of the Fairies.

The child came home in the twilight grey
From the forest old and hoar,
And he laid the spoils of each rifled bower,
Twig and leaflet, and starry flower,
The Master's desk before ;
And a flush of joy like a sudden flame
To the high pale brow of the Watcher came ;
For amid the blossoms, so faint and fair,
The dream of his earnest thought lay there—
A small white flower, whose delicate bells,
Rich in their dower of secret spells,
Could sway the tribes of the Genii more
Than the thickest volume of wizard lore ;—
Many an hour in toil and pain
Had he sought for that charmed flower in vain.



"Well hast thou wrought in the woods to-day!"

The Master said and smiled.

"For the rich harvest thou'st gleaned for me,

The thing that thou lovest the best shall be

Thy guerdon, thou little child!"

And the boy looked up with his wondering eyes,

To the Lord of the muttered spell —

"Ever and aye, to my dying day,

Let me see where the Fairies dwell!"

Then he read from the volume a mystic line,

And he signed his brow with a mighty sign,

And bade that thenceforward all earth and sky

Should be revealed to his wondering eye,

That his free and shackleless soul might brook

On the secret of Nature unharmed to look.

And he saw, when the green soft earth was bathed

In the glow of the wakening morn,

The Fairies dipping their golden curls

In the dew-drops that hung like clustering pearls

From the boughs of the dripping thorn.

He found them asleep in the noontide heat

On the moss of the coolest dell,

Or listening to songs of the traveller bee,

Or to legend of wood-charm and gramarye

That the fern and the foxglove tell;

Holding high revels on summer nights
By the light of the glowworm's lamp,
With a large dock-leaf for their palace roof,
And a network of grasses, whose fragrant woof
From the smooth green carpet kept far aloof
The wind and the chilly damp.

He saw all the merry life they lead,
And their home in the harebell blue,
Or the bright red poppy amid the corn,
That looks on its neighbour with eye of scorn,
And the pale wild rose, and the eglantine
Binding the shrubs with its fragrant twine,
And the cowslip meek, and the violet hid
Bashful and fair the wild weeds amid,
And all the proud flowers bright and rare,
That make the gardens of men so fair,

And e'en 'neath the churchyard yew;—
Floating away on a summer's day

On the butterfly's crimson wing;—
With silvery laughter and loud halloo
Launching their tremulous leaf-canoe

On the waves of the limpid spring;—
Hiding close from the wintry blast

In the clefts of the tall oak's stem,
When the snow falls fast on the hard cold ground,
And the slender grass and the trees are crowned
With a frost-work diadem;

Or nestling in crowds in the warm bright room
Where the cheery home-fires glow,
And peeping with faces of arch delight
At the games that are played on the merry Yule night
Under the mistletoe.

And so in a sinless and beautiful world
He lived on, in heart a child;
And whenever a youth or a maiden fair,
With her loving eyes and her soft brown hair,
And brow unclouded by pain or care,
Passed by him, he gently smiled;—
But if they told him of woe and wrong,
Of the weak borne down by the proud and strong,
While the faces of men grew pale as death,
And wild words were spoken with labouring breath,
And the fierce strife raged, and the heart's deep cry
Was for vengeance and not for victory,—
No burning blush o'er his forehead passed,
From his lips no harsh word fell;
But "Alas!" he said, "for each erring one
Who heareth not Nature's unfaltering tone,
Nor learns, in his brother's heart and his own,
To see where the Fairies dwell!"





Folkestone Church.

GREY old church, so still and stately,
Looking o'er the tossing sea ;
Many are the thoughts and holy
Which have knit my soul to thee.

Thoughts of grief and thoughts of gladness,
Thoughts that to my heart are dear ;
Days of trial and of sadness,
Weary doubt and fainting fear ;

Till, the inward struggle ended,
Sank the waves at Heaven's control,
And the peace of God descended
Dew-like on my parchèd soul.

Many joys like fairest flowers
In my life's full sheaf are bound :
None more dear than those calm hours
That within thy walls I found ;



Than that tranquil summer even
When the air was breathing balm,
And the green earth and the heaven
Communed in a Sabbath calm ;

When the sunset red and golden
Through the western windows came,
Lighting arch and chancel olden
With its glow of purpling flame ;

And the voice whose words of blessing
Cheered my heart in days of yore,
Spake of peace and hope undying
From the Sacred Book once more—

Spake of griefs, in mercy given,
Back an erring soul to win—
Saints, who fearless marched towards Heaven
Through the armed bands of sin.

All the balm that Life's deep sorrow
Craves through its long night of gloom ;
All the hope that gilds the morrow
Dawning o'er the dreaded tomb ;

Royal David, wildly weeping
O'er his loved, rebellious son;
Peter humbled, pardoned, kneeling
To the High and Holy One;

Thrilled my heart as to the music
Of a glad triumphal strain—
Oh, the tears that flowed unbidden
Spake not then of grief or pain!

Nevermore, in danger's hour,
Will I doubt His care divine;
Nevermore let sudden shower
Cloud this favoured life of mine!

Peace, O troubled heart and hasty!
Restless questionings, be dumb!
Can the love which thus hath blessed me
Fail me in the years to come?

25th August, 1857.

Moonlight.

It were a sin to slumber when the night,
The deep blue autumn night, puts on her robe
Of dim mysterious beauty; — one bright star
Gems her meek forehead as she paceth on
August and fair, unfolding all the while
A gorgeous pageantry of snow-wreathed fells,
Palace and porch, mountain and shallow mere,
All imaged in a mass of floating cloud!
And now the Moon looks down on the broad sea
Of small waves tipped with foam — on the calm earth,
The shadowy outline of the ghost-like trees,
And the long grasses steeped in silvery dew.
Oh, Moon beloved! thy presence in my heart
Swells the full tide of dear remembrances,
Joy-giving fancies, high and holy love,
Whose summer glory, when my thoughts go forth,
For the dim Future's misty regions bound,
Freighted with memories of departed days,
Doth light each tapering spar and outspread sail,

And waft them onward o'er a golden track,
Till they cast anchor at the feet of God.
Thence I with calm and passionless gaze look back
On the deep furrows of this troublous life,
And learn how often, when I fearful grew,
Fainting beneath the load of little cares,
And wept and murmured, from the passing cloud
God's angels o'er me bent with eyes of love.
As when of yore across the desert waste
The sons of Jacob toiled, and oft rebelled,
And doubted oft, and sank upon the plain
Wearied and sore athirst—until the Rock
Was smitten by the Prophet, from its side
Leaped the glad waters, and the people lived—
So do our spirits thread their own dark ways,
Wildered and faint, and weak and hard-bested,
Till sorrow comes, and with her gentle hand
Smites the cold heart, and calls the waters forth,
And clothes the desert with the springing green
Of corn, whose harvest shall be stored in heaven!
—I thank Thee, O my God! with my whole heart
I thank Thee for past sorrow! It is well
That the deep current of our lives should flow
'Neath brilliant skies, and gnarled and knotted boughs,
Alternate gloom and glory! There are flowers
Which bloom not till the heart hath stricken been,
And watered well with showers of soft tears.



FOLKESTONE, 6th September, 1857.



Our World.

AND how shall we hymn the praise aright of this brave
old world of ours,
With her diadem of the winter snow, and her robe of the
summer flowers?
A queen on her emerald throne she sits, with pomp and
splendour near,
But ever she bends with a mother's smile to gladden her
children here.

'Tis a fairy world to the child whose heart is a fountain of
love and truth,—
A field where hard battles are fought and won by the
daring soul of youth,—
A harvest ground with its rich ripe sheaves for manhood
calm and sage,—
An altar, whence white-robed angels come, to hallow the
dreams of age.



It hath gladness and life for the morning hour, when the
 skies with crimson glow,
And the dew falls fast from the swaying trees on the
 fragrant sod below ; —
It hath silence and rest, when the deep blue sky with
 thousand stars is bright,
And the glowworm twinkles, an earth-born star, through
 the misty glades at night ;

For the Poet, a bank where the wild flowers blow, and the
 trailing bindweed drops,
And the feathery fern holds regal state in the shade of the
 quiet copse ;
Glimpses of sunshine and beautiful things, voices of way-
 side streams,
Making sweet music for all who love to stray through the
 world of dreams ;

Cities with busy and populous marts, voices of loud ac-
 claim,
For those who barter their life's best hours for the guerdon
 of wealth or fame ;
And antique fanes, in whose length'ning aisles the organ
 pealeth high,
And the banners wave o'er the sculptured sleep of the
 great ones of days gone by.

Pictures of purple and silvery clouds for the eye that
drinks beauty up,
As the wild bee drinketh the honey-dew from the depth
of the rose's cup ;
And holy shrines for the heart whose strings to the touch
of Grief respond,
And a quiet grave for the weary head, and a hope for the
world beyond !

There's not a rain-drop that plashing falls from the gloom
of the thunder-cloud,
But freshens the stems of the parching flowers by the
sultry noontide bowed ;
There's not a dwelling of pain and woe, but Heaven's
bright angels move
Through the home so dark and so desolate, on their mission
of hope and of love.

O World ! to each one who pauseth to hear, singing the
same sweet tone
Of love to gladden our brother's heart, to soften and soothe
our own—
Shame be to him who kneeleth not, in the prime of his
youthful powers,
To bless the God who hath placed him here, in this dear
old world of ours !

The Falling Star.

A GUARDIAN Angel unto us is given
In the first dawning of our mortal birth,
A faithful friend, to keep our names in heaven,
And track the windings of our path on earth ;

And, when our last night comes, the bright Immortal
With star-crowned forehead, through the azure dome
Descends, to enter at the narrow portal
And the dim chambers of our saddened home.

We see him not,—Earth-shadows, thick entwining,
Veil from our gaze the glorious lights afar ;
Only at times, amid the heaven's faint shining,
We trace the swift gleam of a Falling Star ;

And then we hear a voice within us, telling
How the dear hope of some poor heart lies low,
How a soul leaves its old familiar dwelling
For the far country where we all must go.

The Angel comes,—our eyes, with sorrow clouded,
See not his beauty, yet we hush our breath;
In the dark room where Pain and Fear sit shrouded,
We feel his presence, and we call him Death!



He sitteth down beside his suffering brother,
Lays his cool fingers on his throbbing brow,
Whispers, "Awake!"—and they go forth together,
Departing—whither?—Ah, what heart can know?

Only the Spirit knows, whose new-freed pinion
Then o'er the chilling mists of earth doth soar,
In the far light of God's serene dominion,
Loving and loved, to rest for evermore!



My Soul was Darkened.

My soul was darkened with a cloud of fear,
Wrapped in a tangled web of many thoughts,
Elate and buoyant, soaring now on high,
Now falling back, with broken wings, to earth;
And sadly questioning, Why in our souls
Are strong affections kindled, for themselves
Seeking in vain some sure abiding place—
Proud aspirations, tempting us to rise
Above the narrow sphere of human thought,
Dooming us ever to a life of toil—
Hard, fruitless toil—and many a sore defeat,
Till Death o’ertake us, with the goal unwon.
And what beyond—ah! what beyond the tomb?
Is there no new earth where our thoughts may rise
Unchecked, unfettered, hovering o’er the deep,
Like Noah’s raven, and return no more?—



No school where we may reverently sit
At our great Teacher's footstool, drinking in
Rich draughts of loving lore, and upward look,
Nor feel our foreheads crimson with the shame
Of our weak nature, and our failing strength?—
Where the glad hours of each resplendent day
Are marked by gems from Thought's deep-delvèd mine;
Where feet unwearied climb the steep ascent
Of Wisdom's hill, and evermore rejoice
In near approaches to the Fount of Light?

For strange and sorrowful our earthly doom!
Prisoners are we, within a narrow cell
Immured, and girdled with an iron chain.
'Gainst the cold bars our weary heads we lean
And look forth on the glorious world beyond,—
Garden and grassy slope, and village spire,
The bold bluff outline of the giant hill,
And the far glory of the crowning woods,—
And tread in thought, with footstep lithe and free,
The mountain path, and let the scented air
With its cool freshness fan our throbbing brows;
And wander slowly, where the sun's bright beam
Comes glinting through the closely-woven leaves
On the smooth-rounded stem of stately beech,
Or hoary oak, with greenest ivy decked—
The wild bee hovers o'er the tiny flowers,

Nestling amid the green and dewy moss,
And the blue dragon-fly on gauzy wings
Skims o'er the surface of the little brook
That singeth evermore its song of joy—
Then comes a dull strange sound—the measured tread
Of some poor captive in his lonely cell,
And our bright vision fadeth in a mist
Of frozen tears, and we would give our all
Of hope, of life, to be for one short hour
The frailest thing that treads its mother earth,
The meanest bird that bathes her plumage sleek
'Mid the wild flowerets by the river's brim.
Oh! for one hour of freedom! one long draught
Of the pure mountain air! one hope of peace!
We sigh, oh, wearily! and all in vain,
The strong chain binds us, struggle as we will.

We build ourselves a noble fane, rejoice
In the dim glories of the shadowy aisles,
Bid the light arch from slender columns spring;
And statued niche, and roof, and massive wall,
Corbel and cusp, all teem with sculptured thoughts,
Fair as young Fancy's swiftly-woven dream,
Deep as the yearnings of our beating hearts;
And as we build we say, "The sun shall come
Kindling our toil with his rejoicing beams,
When we are laid within our silent home;

Our children too shall come, and in our works
Read the great thoughts which filled their father's brain,
And learn of us how they with patient care
May rear their own proud structures nigh to heaven!"
And, while we speak, the storm-wind howls aloud,
The firm earth heaves beneath our very tread,
And round us, mingled in a mass confused
Of wreck and ruin, lies our life-long toil!
And days roll on, blank, weary, hopeless days;
The knotted grass around the fallen shafts
Twineth its serpent-folds, and green and damp
Unsightly stains defile the marble fair;
The fern-leaf nods above the tottering arch,
And the wild ivy with her delicate sprays
Doth bridge the chasms of the rifted walls;
Nature, in all her ripe luxuriant beauty,
Mocketh our idle grief; and sick at heart
We lie down in the dust,—our hopes all crushed,
Our fairy fancies shorn of all their grace,
Our very hearts benumbed: nor busy hand
Nor resolute will, discrowned and fettered now,
Shall bid the shattered temple rise anew!

We make ourselves an idol—deep within
Our secret souls we raise the gorgeous shrine,
And lavishly we pour our wealth of thought,
All the rich harvest we from life have gleaned,

All the ripe fruitage and the golden boughs
From the fair Eden of our phantasy.
Joy, Love, and Hope — ay, Life itself — we give
In blind heart-worship; and we crave no bliss
But evermore to look upon its face,
Bask in its smile, and steep our drowsy sense
In the sweet music of its lulling voice;
And gladly, fearlessly, would lay us down
To die before its throne, so we might win
The meed of one kind word, one pitying smile.
Anon we build a fair and goodly ship
And lay therein our idol, on the deck
Heaping a costly pile of sacrifice,
And high o'er all a golden censer, filled
With frankincense and myrrh and fragrant gums,
Lit with the fire of our own burning hearts;
And fondly dream of calm and sunny seas
Where we may float for ever in our joy,
And fear no storm, and brook no earthly thing
To tempt one stray thought from our treasured love.
The small white waves that play around the keel,
Singing like children in their rosy mirth,
Unnoticed part it from us; when in haste
Forward we spring, like giants in their wrath
They hurl us, baffled, wounded, back to land;—
And slowly, slowly, ever out to sea
Drifts our lost treasure: in our speechless woe
With clasped hands and straining eyes we stand,

My Soul was Darkened.

209

And see — oh misery! — the fragrant flame
Our foolish hearts had kindled slowly creep
O'er all our precious things, as creeps the hand
Of loving infant o'er its mother's cheek;
Then round the cordage twine, and fiercely wave
Its crimson banner in the face of heaven,
Calling on all to watch the burning skiff,—
The funeral skiff of our all-wasted lives!
Then sinking gradual, till a broad red star
With angry lustre frights the twilight grey,
And fainter, duller grows, till swallowed quite
By the night shadows and the howling deep;
And we remain — alone! and at our feet,
Broken and charred and wrapped in loathly weeds,
The ebbing waves in cold derision cast
But blackened fragments on the wreck-strewn shore!





Advent.

He came in all humility, to tread
The rocky path of poverty and shame;
Fierce beat the storm on His defenceless head,
And scorn and insult mocked His fainting frame.

He came in mercy; loving deeds he wrought
To save the erring in their utter need,—
Sight to the blind, health to the weak He brought,
And hope and comfort to the bruised reed.


He came in wisdom, from His bright abode
Pouring rich gifts alike on old and young;
Deep solemn truth, and holiest counsel, flowed
In sweet persuasive accents from His tongue.



He came in power, to save His chosen race
From the dark sorrow of their early doom,
To guide them gently to their native place,
To burst the fetters of the dreaded tomb.

And He shall come in glory, robed and crowned,
To pass His sentence on the tribes of men.
When the rocks rend, and quake the hills around,
Judge of the world ! oh, hear us, help us then !

•







The Soul when on the Verge of her
New Being.

THE soul, when on the verge of her new being,
Puts off her primal vestiture of snow,
And craves of One All-powerful, All-seeing,
Some light to guide her thro' the wilds below ;
And God replieth, " Be it thine, unshaken,
The stated round of duty to fulfil ;
In the far world, exiled but not forsaken,
To learn My purpose, and to work My will !"

And so, to earth we come ; dim recollections
Of love and gladness haunt our dawning sense,
Imperfect truths and indistinct reflections
Moulding our hearts, with strange sweet influence ;
And oftentimes we try, with timid fingers,
To stay the thoughts that flit on rapid wings,—
To catch the wondrous melody that lingers,
Echo of heaven, among our heart's deep strings.



The Soul when on the Verge of her New Being. 213

Some few there are, thrice blessed ones! who number
Their happy days by good achieved and won,—
Who, when the balmy night falls, sweetly slumber,—
Who greet with hopeful gaze the morrow's sun.
To them the glowing sky, the dripping showers,
As messengers of love and hope are given;
Their toils, their thoughts, like wreaths of trailing flowers
Round Life's white columns, reach well-nigh to heaven.

But we, the tempest-tossed, perplexed, and turning
In one dull labyrinth of sound and strife,
Oh! who shall aid our spirits, ever yearning
To solve the mighty mysteries of life?
Oh! who shall give us what we need—the power
To curb the restless thoughts within us nursed,
To quench our thirst, tho' but for one brief hour,
Where from deep urns the founts of Knowledge burst?

Strong must the faith be, in our breast implanted,
Through this vast wilderness to lead us right;
Strong the resolve,—though baffled, still undaunted,—
To grope through clouds and darkness back to light!
To rule our stubborn wills, and study ever
To learn and to obey God's high behest,
And win from strenuous toil and stern endeavour
The prize we seek, the balm we pray for—rest!

214 *The Soul when on the Verge of her New Being.*

But woe to us, if our o'erburdened nature
Faint with the dread of life-long strife and pain ;
If we, pale Terror spread o'er every feature,
Fold our weak hands, and cry, "The quest is vain!"
With poisoned sloth and doubtings serpent-wreathèd,
Marring the promise of our heavenly birth,
Deem the rich gifts, by God himself imbreathèd,
Earth-born, and therefore cleaving unto earth!

Jacobite Song.

WRITTEN FOR MUSIC.

Oh! saw ye the march of our leal Highland men?
A white rose in each bonnet they wore for Prince
Charlie!
Oh! heard ye the pibroch that rang through the glen,
When the Stuart came back to us over the sea?
And gaily we lighted the bright beacon fire,
To spread the glad tidings o'er mountain and lea,
And we joyed as we watched it rise broader and higher,
'Twas a sign of our welcome, O Charlie! to thee.

Oh! saw ye the Standard its glories unfold
In the glen where we plighted our faith to Prince
Charlie?—
When the chiefs and the clansmen were met as of old,
And unsheathed was each claymore, and bent was each
knee?

And proudly we said, "In old Scotland once more,
The deeds of the Bruce and the Gordon shall be!"
For steadfast and brave as the heroes of yore,
Were the chieftains who went forth, O Charlie! with
thee.

And blythe was the day when in old Holyrood
The feast and the revel were graced by Prince
Charlie;
And they rode forth in triumph, the gallant and good,
And the bright sunshine lighted their proud panoply.
Not a whisper of sorrow was heard on that day,
All was hope, all was glory, and glad loyalty,
For we hushed each sad thought, and no word did
we say
But a prayer and a blessing, O Charlie! for thee.

Yes! we gave thee our dearest, our bravest, our best;
. Oh, freely we gave them to follow Prince Charlie!
And right well we knew, on each old honoured crest
Not a shadow of fear or of falsehood could be.
On the red battle-field, in the night watches lone,
On the scaffold of shame, and the high gallows-tree;
In the gloom and the dungeon—oh! have they not
shewn
How deep was the love that we bore unto thee!

Jacobite Song.

217

They are gone! they are gone! and we look now in vain
For our sons and our brothers who went with thee,
Charlie!

And our homes are laid waste, and our tears fall like
rain,

When we think of the dear ones we never shall see.
But their names—in thy heart they are treasured, we
know,

In thy desolate exile, across the salt sea,—
And ever, till death lay each weary head low,
Will we pray in our sorrow, O Charlie! for thee.



The Call of God.

"AND they called the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise;
He calleth thee."—St. Mark x. 49.

LONELY in the sunlight splendid,
Dark in the full blaze of day,
In his anguish poor, unfriended,
Sat the blind man by the way,
Crying, with a voice of sorrow,
"Oh, have mercy, Lord, on me!"
And the lips that late did chide him,
And with bitter words deride him,
Sweetly now they breathe beside him,
Saying, "Rise, He calleth thee!"

Blinded am I, and benighted
In a desert wide and drear,
Oft perplexed, and sore affrighted
With a chilling, nameless fear.

The Call of God.

219


From the bonds of sin and sorrow
Pining, struggling to be free —
From a life of selfish scheming,
Half resolve and outward seeming,
Slothful ease and idle dreaming,
Rise, my soul, He calleth thee!

By thy life so richly dowered,
By each little duty done,
By a thousand blessings showered
On thy pathway, thankless one!
By the beauty and the gladness
Which make earth so fair to see,
By thy spirit's high yearning,
Duty and its recompense,
Lifted through and inspiration,
Oh, my soul, He calleth thee!

Callest thou from morn to eve,
In all places at all hours,
When the sun rises high in heaven,
When the dew is on the flowers,
When the silvery moonbeams gleam
Softly in the verdant bow,
And a host of fair and wondrous
Things through dark woods and mountains,
Linger the ignorant, poor the number —
Oh, my soul, He calleth thee!

The Call of God.

By the still small voice that ever
Whispers thee of truth and right,
By each broken, weak endeavour,
By each earnest prayer for light,—
In thy heart, whose sin-stained tablets
Thou and He alone can see ;
With a zeal whose altar-fires
Kindle all thy dead desires,
With a love that never tires,
Oh, my soul, He calleth thee !



Be Patient.

Be patient! ye who toil with bruised feet
Up the long steep ascent of pain and care,
Who faint beneath the weary noontide heat
And the sore burden of your heart's despair;
And ye who sow with hands that never rest,
Yet win no fruitage from Life's barren track,
Casting your bread upon the ocean's breast,
Whose thankless surges give no answer back;
Not in one summer's day of dreamy hours
Her richest wealth doth bounteous Nature yield,
After long nights, rough winds, and heavy showers,
Doth the corn ripen in the harvest field.

Be patient! ye who mourn with frenzied weeping
In the dark chambers where your dead are laid,
Who give Life's fairest flowers unto the keeping
Of the green hillock and the cypress shade—

And thou, who seest the blighting breath of change
Steal o'er the face that still to thee is dear,
While gloomy lies thy onward path, and strange,
With none to bless thee, none to soothe and cheer;
Oh! think Whose voice rose on the fainting air
In night's dread stillness, 'neath the olive tree,—
The angel, witness of thy Saviour's prayer,
It may be, draweth nigh to strengthen thee!



Be patient! ye who pray, though mists of sin
Hide the White Throne from your distempered eye;
Though fears without raise haunting doubts within,
And Hope is silent, and the storm sweeps by,
Till your sad hearts, like ships at random tossed,
Shorn of their early pride, are bruised and rent;
And one by one the guiding stars are lost,
The fierce waves roar, and Faith is well-nigh spent;
Oh, sorrow-stricken! He who ne'er forsaketh,
The God of Mercy, watcheth o'er your way;
The cold grey light that in the far East breaketh
Is the sure herald of a brighter day!



A Summer Noon.

Oh, sultry summer noon!
Oh, burning sun of June,
Scorching the faint and parched earth with fierce, unpitying
glare!
Not a cloud is there to view
In the sky so darkly blue,
And the eye aches with the sunshine, hot sunshine
everywhere.

Five days are barely run,
Since thou, oh, joyous sun!
Lighted for me the meadows green, and wood, and
waving tree,
And, in sight of birds and flowers
Flew my happy matin hours,
In commune with the friend late-found, the great Aurora
Leigh!



Entranced, drinking up,
As from a crystal cup,
The tale of social grief at war with high, impassioned
Art,
The cloud-wreathed morning skies
Grew more radiant to mine eyes,
And the rich earth caught fresh glory from the Poet's
raptured heart.

I looked to the green hill,
And my thoughts they went at will
To the wooded upland far beyond, the breezy, open
heath,
Where the white thorns all in bloom
Sent abroad their sweet perfume,
And the golden gorse made answer from below with
odorous breath.

The tall trees' shadow lay
Calm upon the meadow, gay
With a closely-woven tapestry all gemmed with early
dew ;
And in the woods around
I knew the very ground
Was paved with starry primroses, and bells of azure
hue.

And the birds sang everywhere,
Till they filled the drowsy air
With a wealth of song that jubilant rolled on from bush
and tree,
And the cuckoo's double note
Through the tumult sweet did float
Like the aye-recurring bass chords of a jocund
melody.

Now, for sounds I have, alas!
The carriages that pass
With noisy wheels along the road whence clouds of dust
are shed;
And for sights, the dull blank wall
Of the silent houses, all
With their white blinds closed so carefully, as if all
within were dead!

Fiercely the sunbeams glare,
And warm the languid air
As though from melting furnaces it swept with angry
speed;
And for shadows, only one,
As of prison bars, is thrown
From my open window on the page I try in vain
to read.

'Tis a story quaint and old,
Writ by hands long since grown cold,
Of kings and nobles who went forth across the Eastern
 sea,
The Holy Town to win
From the bearded Saracen,
And bid Europe's banners flutter in the winds of
 Galilee.

A glorious tale in sooth
Of our old world's brilliant youth,
Fit subject for a Poet's thought—but I cannot read
 to-day,
I am like an idle child
From its schoolroom tasks beguiled
By a thousand recollections of a pleasant holiday.

And ever, evermore,
I pine for forests hoar,
For the voice of wooded nightingales, for the breath of
 sweet field-flowers,
For the murmur and the gleam
Of a little reedy stream,
And the drowsy hum of insect wings that flit among the
 bowers.

For a cool, deep-shaded seat
At the stately chesnut's feet,
While the noontide shadows flickering should wave athwart
the dell,
There again the dream to weave
Of St. Agnes' haunted Eve,
Or the strange mysterious trials of the lovely Christabel.

And flakes of chesnut flowers
On my book should fall in showers,
Each snowy blossom daintily flecked with a crimson
stain;
And I would not brush away
Those which on the verses lay,
But turn the pages carefully, and let them all remain;

That, in some future hour,
When far from wooded bower,
I of my books craved respite from sad thought or daily
toil,
And started to behold
Those faded blooms and old,
Staining the page whose whiteness loving tears alone
should soil;

Then, with a sweet surprise
Before my tear-dimmed eyes
Should float the sudden picture of that calm sequestered
nook,
And with the Poet's lay
Should an echo blend alway
Of the wood-birds' singing voices, and the murmur of the
brook!



4th June, 1858.



Love at First Sight.

TO MARY G. M. R.

I TURNED unwilling, from the fairyland
Of my dear room, where, from the pictured walls
And shelves well stored with volumes of delight,
Old friends look down upon me lovingly,
And woo me ever to their converse sweet,
To sit in lighted rooms, and bear my part
In what the world calls "social intercourse."
Weary was I of meetings oft-renewed,
Where speech in one straight solemn groove runs on,
So smoothly decorous, it dare not rise
Above mere common phrases, and no thought
Wins, save of self-accusing, when alone
We kneel, to make our nightly shrift to God,
And cry "this hour, and this, most utterly
Were wasted!"—So I mused as forth I passed,
Looking regretful at the cheerful lamp
And bright home faces which I left behind.



A few brief words of kindest courtesy,
And I sat down beside thee — thou didst turn
Thine eyes on me, and ere my heart could ask
What stirred its depths so, straight it leaped to thine,
As leaps the torrent from the mountain top
To meet the stream below, and loses all
Its waters in its bosom, and forgets
Its lonely stillness in its new-found love,
And flows with it in joy across the plain.
And we two sat together all that night,
And I, who went unwillingly, returned
With food for happy talk and frequent dream,
And lofty musing in my quiet hours.
Of Art we spake — the voice of God which breathes
In beauty to His creatures, witnessing
For truth and greatness in a fallen world;
And of the human ministrants He sends,
Anointed, crowned, to utter forth His will;
And how the inspiration waxeth dim,
And colours fade beneath the Master's hand,
When he proves traitor to his spirit's vow,
And loves the guerdon better than the toil.
We spake? *Thou* spakest! thou didst bring thy wealth
Of knowledge gained 'neath clear Italian skies
And brightened with the sunshine of thy soul;
I gave thee nothing — nothing but a heart
Which listened lovingly to thee, and felt
Ennobled by thy words. And then we talked

Of Poets — artists they, more visibly
Commissioned, consecrated, and endowed
With speech that all may hear: and first, of her
Who stands, a woman, on the topmost peak
Of human excellence, and blends the lore
Of classic Greece with England's fire-side love,
And teaches mighty truths in silver speech,
The white-stoled Priestess of this nether world.
Of him too, the sweet singer of the West,
Whose holy verses come to us like psalms,
Reaching the ears of those who sit i' the dark
Without the portal of the Mother Church.
And thou didst read from many a pictured page,
Verse after verse of solemn melody,
Of sweetest tenderness, aspiring high,
And holiest comfort — and I thought the while
That other Mary must have been like thee,
Whose spiritual beauty, holy eyes,
And stream-like voice did charm the Poet's heart
At Interlachen, and did win for us
The sweetest, tenderest tale of Love's Romance
That ever blossomed on our old worn earth.
For holy was thy face — I marvel not
It won from me such sudden reverence;
For I since then have heard (though not from thee)
Of thy young heart's deep sorrow, and its true
And pure devotion in the work of God,
So loving and so meek — I knew it not,

But might have guessed—'twas written on thy brow!
And once again we met, with clasping hands,
And words of friendliness, and answering smiles,—
And then we parted.—Thou art dwelling now
In that old German land whose soil was trod
By Art's high-sceptred ones—whose glorious speech
Thrills with the sweetness yet of Schiller's song,
And Goethe's temple-music—I sit here,
And watch the silent stars that nightly rise
Above the housetops, and bring greetings sweet
To me from field and fountain far away—
And oft I think of thee.

Mary! thy name
I utter to myself in silent hours,
And marvel if at times, when I so yearn
To hold thy hand, and look into thine eyes,
And say how dear, how very dear thou art,
Thy spirit answers to the chord I strike,
And sends a thought in music back to me.

Sweet Friend! I call thee friend, for Love I hold
To be no common plant of gradual growth,
Fed with perpetual talk, pruned, trained with care,
A prim espalier in the straight, smooth walks
Of Life's well-weeded garden—true Love springs
Swiftly as lightning from the parted cloud,
Sudden and bright, and mocks the feeble hand

That thinks to check it, or direct its course.
But lightnings blast and sear — Love sanctifies !
Nay then ! 'tis liker to yon star God calls
To blaze where all before was void and dark,
And though the storm drift by, to shine undimmed
Through all the live-long night.

Sweet Friend ! I raise
My forehead to those nightly stars, and pray
The God whose name is Love, that He would make
My spirit daily purer, and more free
From stain of lower earth, that when once more
He gives me to behold thee, and rejoice
In the glad interchange of kindred thought,
(Albeit in grace and goodness far below,)
Thou wilt not break my cherished dream, nor think
Me all unworthy of thy generous love !

June, 1858.







Summer Lightning.

SUMMER lightning! summer lightning!
Swift and clear as Poet's dream,
All the midnight sky is bright'ning
With your sudden arrowy gleam.

The cloud-curtain sways before ye
In the grey horizon low,
Where the day died in the glory
Of the sunset, hours ago.

Crescent moon of love is dreaming,
Sweet stars watch her virgin rest;
Fiery shafts of wrath are streaming
Silently from out the West.



Summer Lightning.

235

On the dark clouds, burning pictures
Paint ye, as ye come and go ;
Stranded ships among the breakers
Tossing wildly to and fro ;

Leaguered fortress, shattered, riven,
Tottering into swift decline,
When victorious towards the heaven
Springs the stealthy foeman's mine.

Summer lightnings ! swift as fancies !
Ah, I mind me of the day
When with eager childhood's glances
I beheld your rapid play ;

Not in fear, but reverent wonder
And a heart-beat mystical,
For I deemed the echoing thunder
Clave the heaven's parted wall ;

And the lightning-flash before me
Was a burning radiance shed
Momentary, from the glory
Of the floors where Seraphs tread.

Summer Lightning.

Long, long have those days departed;
I am greatly changed since then;
Something to me have imparted
Noble books of thinking men,—

But the Guide who then bent o'er me,
Childhood's Angel, comes no more,
And I cannot see the glory
Of the Seraph-trodden floor!



The Fountain of Réveillon.

"CETTE eau est merveilleuse en ce point, qu'il faut, quand on en boit, forcément revenir à Gisors, quelque part qu'on aille. Du temps des Croisades, raconte la tradition populaire, les pèlerins qui avaient fait vœu de visiter la Palestine, ne manquaient jamais d'aller boire au Réveillon, pour ne pas mourir aux terres étrangères."—VICOMTE WALSH, *Souvenirs de Voyage*.

BRIGHT fountain of the vale !
How merrily thy silver waters leap
Above the flowers that crown thy banks, and steep
In dew the primrose pale !

The grey and broken cross,
By pious hands once raised to mark thy shrine,
Is mantled now with the wood-ivy's twine,
And draped with richest moss ;

And where the birds flit by,
Making the green leaves rustle overhead,
For one brief moment on thy breast is shed
A gleam of the blue sky —

The Fountain of Réveillon.

A passing gleam, for thou
Art wrapped in shade and silence — not a sound
But thy wave's ripple o'er the pebbly ground,
Most musical and low.

There, where the path winds higher
Among white-blossomed orchard trees, I see
The village gables clustered lovingly
Around the old church spire ;

And on the grassy mound,
With brow thorn-wreathed and pale with deathly pangs,
I see the sculptured Christ who silent hangs
Above the burial-ground.

Deep thoughts of love and death !
How heavily upon my heart ye weigh,
Darkening the blossoms of this fair spring day
As with the North Wind's breath !

To-morrow's dawn proclaims
To me the advent of a new, strange life ;
To-morrow's winds will bring me sounds of strife
And unfamiliar names.

The Fountain of Béveillon.

239

And many suns to me,
Rising, shall speak of unknown hopes and fears,
And many moons shall wax and wane in tears
Ere I return to thee.

Bright fountain of the vale!
Above thy source the bold Crusaders hung,
When war-notes filled the air, and old and young
Had girded on their mail;

And back across the sea
They came, to kneel again at thy sweet shrine,
Back from the battle-fields of Palestine,
And hills of Galilee;

And whoso, since those hours,
Thy stream hath tasted on his pilgrim way,
After long years hath come again, to pray
Amid thy leafy bowers;

Because no earthly thing,
Though the heart hold it fast and cherish well,
Hath potency enough to break the spell
Laid on thy hallowed spring.

The Fountain of Bèzeillon.

But now, beside me passed
A mother leading hence her only child,
Saying, " Though rough thy path may be, and wild,
Thou wilt come home at last ! "

And I too fain would come,
When the long travail of my youth is o'er,
To rest me in the dear, vine-shaded door
Of mine own village home.

How strange 'twill be, and sweet,
The loving debt of childhood to repay,
When manhood's stalwart arm shall be their stay
Who led my tottering feet ;

And 'mid old friends, in sooth,
Rich in the guerdon of their uttered praise,
At evening hour my grateful voice to raise
And prove thy legend's truth !

Yet stay ! if there should be
No loving face to brighten when I came—
No smiling lip sweet words of praise to frame—
No heart to joy with me —

The Fountain of Bèveillon.

241



If, in my Mother's chair
A stranger ruled with loud imperious tongue—
If I should hear quick jest and ribald song,
Where rose my Father's prayer—

Should stand alone, and see
Strange children laughing round the cottage fire—
Should find no friend here, save the old Church spire,
The sculptured Christ, and thee?—

Bright fountain of the vale!
Untouched by me thy merry waves shall glide,—
'Twere better far, across the ocean wide
To end Life's weary tale!



'Twere better far to roam
With bleeding feet upon a foreign shore,
Than stand, a stranger, at the well-known door,
And have no welcome home!





Dominus Regnavit.

Yes! it is strange indeed,—
Oh! very strange and sorrowful, to look
On the dark pages of the wondrous book
Wherein the destinies of man we read;
And in most solemn mood,
When the loud voice of present life is mute,
Each impious pact with evil to compute,
Each feeble effort in the cause of good;
And reckon all our gain
Of pride and grief, of wisdom and of pain,—
All aspirations towards the higher spheres,
And ask whereunto shall our souls attain,
And which beseems us best, of hopes or fears,
And are we nearer Heaven than in the
by-gone years?



O'er the green earth well-nigh
 Have nineteen hundred flower-crowned summers
 flown,
 Since He came down from Heaven, the Holy
 One,
 For us to suffer and for us to die,—
 And we, who bear His name,
 Low kneeling in the dust, with weeping eyes,
 Rend from our hearts each fond and frail disguise,
 And, with quick sobs of penitential shame,
 Confess ourselves less true,
 Less fervent, and less loving, than the few
 Poor shepherds who the glorious Star descried,
 And heard the Angels sing their anthems new,
 And, leaving all beside,
 Followed through ways unknown, their bright
 mysterious Guide.

We call ourselves the crowned
 And sceptred of the nations; throned on high,
 We look across the earth with haughty eye,
 And send our mandates to her furthest bound,—
 And Wisdom with us dwells,
 And Science eagle-eyed, and Art divine,
 And Wealth brings treasures from the dusky
 mine,
 And forests wild, and ocean's cavern cells;—

But on our quiet homes,
And on the splendour of our palace domes,
The curse lies heavy, as in olden time ;
To mar our sweetest strains harsh discord comes,
And at the feast sublime
Of lofty pomp, throng ghosts of ignorance and
crime.

They ring,—the glad Church bells,
And summon us at morn and eve to pray,
Proclaim with holy joy the Sabbath day,
And call to fanes where blessing surely dwells.
And by the cheerful hearth,
Sweet prayers to God are said when day is done,
And listening to their soft and solemn tone,
We marvel there should still be sin on earth.
But there are those who hear
The church-bells ringing on from year to year,
Nor guess the blessed tidings they proclaim,
Thousands, who count our earth a desert drear,
Whereon, in want and shame,
They move, and mourn, and die, and never
breathe Thy Name!

Not in our Eastern world,
Where round our throne strange supplications rise,
And giant falsehoods veil the brilliant skies
With smoke from heathen sacrifice upcurled ;

Not in the deserts old,
Where we, as Christian visitants, have trod,
And thrown down many a carved and molten god,
And reared new altars to our idol, Gold.—
But voices here, O God!
Rise, not in prayer, to Thy divine abode,
Voices of children wandering far astray,
Of strong men sinking 'neath Life's bitter load,
Whose wail of anguish may
Against us loudly plead at Thy great Judgment
day!

And yet, there are in sooth
Good men among us — loving hearts that stoop
To raise the fallen — heads that never droop,
And clarion voices witnessing for truth —
Amid the sin and shame
Which hides our ways from holy eyes above,
Such men, the angels in their gentle love
As brothers hail, nor blush to breathe their name.
And we, who toil and seek
Some covert from the storm, and blindly speak,
And try with infant hands the flood to stem,
Feeling ourselves too faithless and too weak
To reach the diadem,
Look up, and fold our hands, and wish ourselves
like them!

Thou, God! hast stricken us
With sorrow wherein mercy was revealed;
Death-words have reached us from the battle-field
Whose holy music well might quicken us —
E'en now, our hearts are moved
With the wild deeds wrought 'neath our Orient
sky,
Half pride for lofty faith and daring high,
Half sorrow for the martyrs, the beloved!
And we, in our despair,
Have said the burden was too hard to bear,
Our strength too little for the trial day,
Crushed selfish thought, and given our souls to
prayer,
And then Thy rod was lifted, and straightway
We from Thine altars turned, and each one
went his way.

Oh! for the prayers of yore
That rose when Judah's holy place lay low!
Oh! for the faith that growing with each blow,
Its fears, its sorrows, to Thy Presence bore!
Our vines are trodden down,
Our pleasant fields laid waste, our wars begin,
And foes without, and furious strife within,
Assail the suffering Church Thou'st called
Thine own.

Than saints and seraphs higher,
 Thou who didst tread the wine-press in Thine ire,
 And save Thy sons when they were faint and few,
 And with strong arm and chariot of fire
 Their routed foes pursue,
 When unto Thee they cried — O Father! hear
 us too!

We read, with eager eyes,
 Of swift deliverance to Thy chosen wrought,
 Answers vouchsafed to prayer and holy thought,
 Great mercies past, and future prophecies,—
 And on our foreheads, high
 The warm blood mantles, and our hearts beat loud,
 Now with the woes of suffering Israel bowed,
 Now bounding to her shout of victory!
 The veil is lifted back
 For one short moment, and the shining track
 Revealed, where olden saints have walked with
 Thee,
 Then o'er us falls again the grey cloud-wrack
 And we, who pine to be
 At rest, are drifted far on waves of misery.

We doubt, we faint, we weep,
 In impotence of sorrow where we stand,
 The seed once scattered by our idle hand,
 In shame and bitter sorrow now we reap.

Yet is the promise sure,
That Earth's vast kingdoms shall become Thine
own,
And the light circling Thine eternal Throne
For ever and for ever shall endure.
In pain and sad affright,
Through the long watches of the weary night,
We hearken to the fast encroaching sea—
Our only prayer is for that morrow's light,
Our only hope in Thee—
Lord of the Universe! oh, when shall Thy
great harvest be?



9th July, 1858.



The Poet's Thanksgiving.

I THANK Thee, O my God!
For all the beauty, all the summer glory
Of this fair world whereon in joy I stand;—
For the old village churches grey and hoary
Lifting their belfries o'er the pleasant land;
For little cottages, whose lattice windows
And quaint old gables overhang the way,
With sloping rafters, whose fantastic shadows
Tell us long stories of an elder day,
While the green copses and the sunny meadows
Ring with the merriment of childish play;

For the bright dawn that o'er the ocean breaketh,
Flushing the white cliffs with its rosy sheen,
When the wild bird his matin-song awaketh
In leafy covert fresh and cool and green;



For the rich sunset, floods of regal splendour
Purpling the summit of the mountain steep,
And bands of crimson cloudlets, long and slender,
Fading away into a holy sleep;
And the mild radiance, pure, serene, and tender,
Of moon and stars upon the quiet deep;

For pleasant pathways, made for summer rambles,
Cool valleys shaded from the noontide sun;
Banks canopied with ferns, and flowering brambles
Beneath whose arch the hidden waters run;
For the broad shadow which the green hill casteth
In the hot sunshine on the level plain,
What time the reaper, warm and weary, hasteth
To bind in swelling sheaves the ripened grain,
And gratefully the wayworn traveller resteth
Amid the windings of the grassy lane;

For all the songs that in the woods resounding
Speak of a life of freedom and of glee;
For all the creatures in their young joy bounding
In health and gladness o'er the sunny lea;
For coronals of drooping leaves, and bowers
Whence bright as gems the scarlet berries look;
Ripe autumn's fruits, and summer's clustered flowers
With beauty crowning each sequestered nook,
Flinging across man's path their wealth in showers,
Gazing with blue eyes on the murmuring brook;

The Poet's Thanksgiving.

251

For every bank whereon the ivy traileth;
For every weed that makes the hedgerows bright;
For every little fleecy cloud that saileth
Through the blue heaven of a summer night;—
And for the eye which sees in all creation
The type of that more glorious world above,
The rod of truest, holiest divination
At whose command the springs of worship move,
Till thought is lost in silent adoration
Of all Thy power, all Thy bounteous love,
I thank Thee, O my God!

FOLKESTONE, *August*, 1858.







To the Poet Moultrie.

It is not thine, the lofty verse that tells of warriors bold,
Of the pomp of feudal Chivalry, and the deathless deeds of old,
Great names that shine like burning orbs through the mighty
realms of Art,
And the wild, yet vain aspirings of the restless human heart.

No! the blessed calm of English homes, remote from fear
and strife,
The chequered light of Thought which plays o'er a
Christian pastor's life,—
The Sabbath in the crowded fane—the sunset by the sea,—
The shout of Childhood's noisy mirth,—are fitter themes for
thee.

The friendships waking in our hearts affections pure and
deep,—
The graves, above whose grassy mounds such bitter tears
we weep,—
The household love whose tenderness can soothe our souls,
and shed
The golden glow of Fairyland o'er the paths we daily tread.



Of these thou speak'st in soothing strains ; and I have joyed
to bend
In quiet hours above thy page, and own thee as a friend ;
To praise thy sweet or serious rhymes, and often pause
between
To conjure up a vision of thy face and outward mien.

I've seen thee in the holy place, when my thoughts were
hushed and calm,—
And the air yet trembled with the notes of the sweetly-
chanted Psalm,—
I've heard thee speak of founts of bliss, to the world's poor
votaries sealed,
Rare treasures, lofty mysteries, to God's Elect revealed.

High words thou spakest in that hour,—high thoughts didst
thou impart
Of toil and suffering nobly borne by the Christian's steadfast
heart ;
Those words within my heart will dwell, and make thy verse
to me
As the echo of a Sabbath bell heard 'neath the greenwood
tree.

April, 1857.





Angels.

SAY not, "It hath been spoken,
God's Word to sinful men,
And never sound or token
Shall stir our souls again,
Or break the heavy stillness that so long o'er Earth
doth reign!"

No more the Monarch trembleth
Before the grey-haired Seer;
No cloudy pillar resteth
On the Sanctuary here,—
Yet God speaks unto us always, if we will but turn and hear.

He speaks to us, not only
In the thunder of the sky,
But in hours of silence lonely,
In our musings great and high,
And the strong and deep emotions which within our bosoms lie.



And each heart by sorrow smitten
 Is a page of purest white,
 Whereon His Hand hath written
 A word of love and light,
 One day it shall be folded in His Volume infinite.

Say not, "They have departed,
 Our Angel guests of yore,
 Perplexed and heavy-hearted
 Their lost friendship we deplore,
 For they soothe us with their presence, and they guide us
 nevermore."

They are with us, they are near us,
 In our trials manifold,
 With soft-whispered words they cheer us,
 And our troubled lives enfold
 With a care that knows no changing, with a love that
 grows not cold.

No more we see them, blending
 Earth-lights with the divine,
 Ascending and descending
 Along the visioned line—
 Still the golden gates are open, still the rainbow-pinions shine.

Each time we sink desponding
In the day of grief and care,
And cry, the heavy burden
Is too much for us to bear,
The Angel of God's Mercy descends unto us there.

And when the bonds of sadness
From off our souls are riven,
And we lift them, full of gladness
For the blessings God hath given,
A glorious Angel riseth with that prayer of joy to
Heaven!

The Dear Old Time.

Do you mind the days, the happy days,
When life with us was young,
And merrily in the gay green-wood
The birds their carol sung,
And the holly-leaves, as the breeze went by,
Made a pleasant rustling chime,—
What a fairy land was the rich, bright earth
To us, in the dear old time!

And the flowers we plucked,—I see them now
All wet with the morning dew,
Or nestling close on the warm hill-side
Where the waving brackens grew;—
I have heard sweet songs, I have culled fair flowers
In this, and another clime,
But I never found bird or flower to match
With those of the dear old time!

The Dear Old Time.

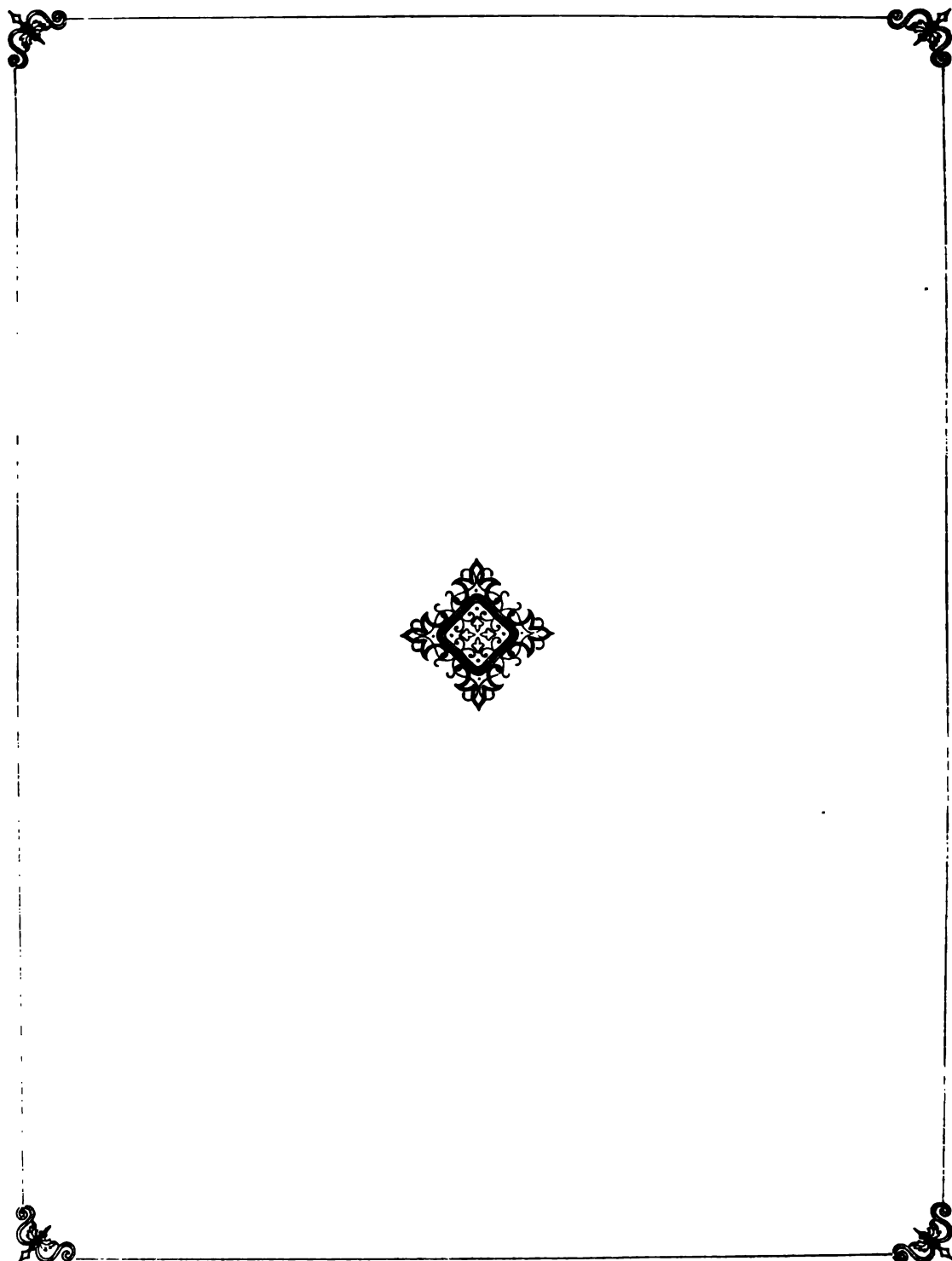
And the books we read,—how we scanned the page
With the eager eyes of love,
And each lay of truth or of old romance
With the thread of our own lives wove,—
How we loved the stories of olden days!
How we shrank from each tale of crime!
There were no discussions of false and true,
No doubts, in the dear old time!

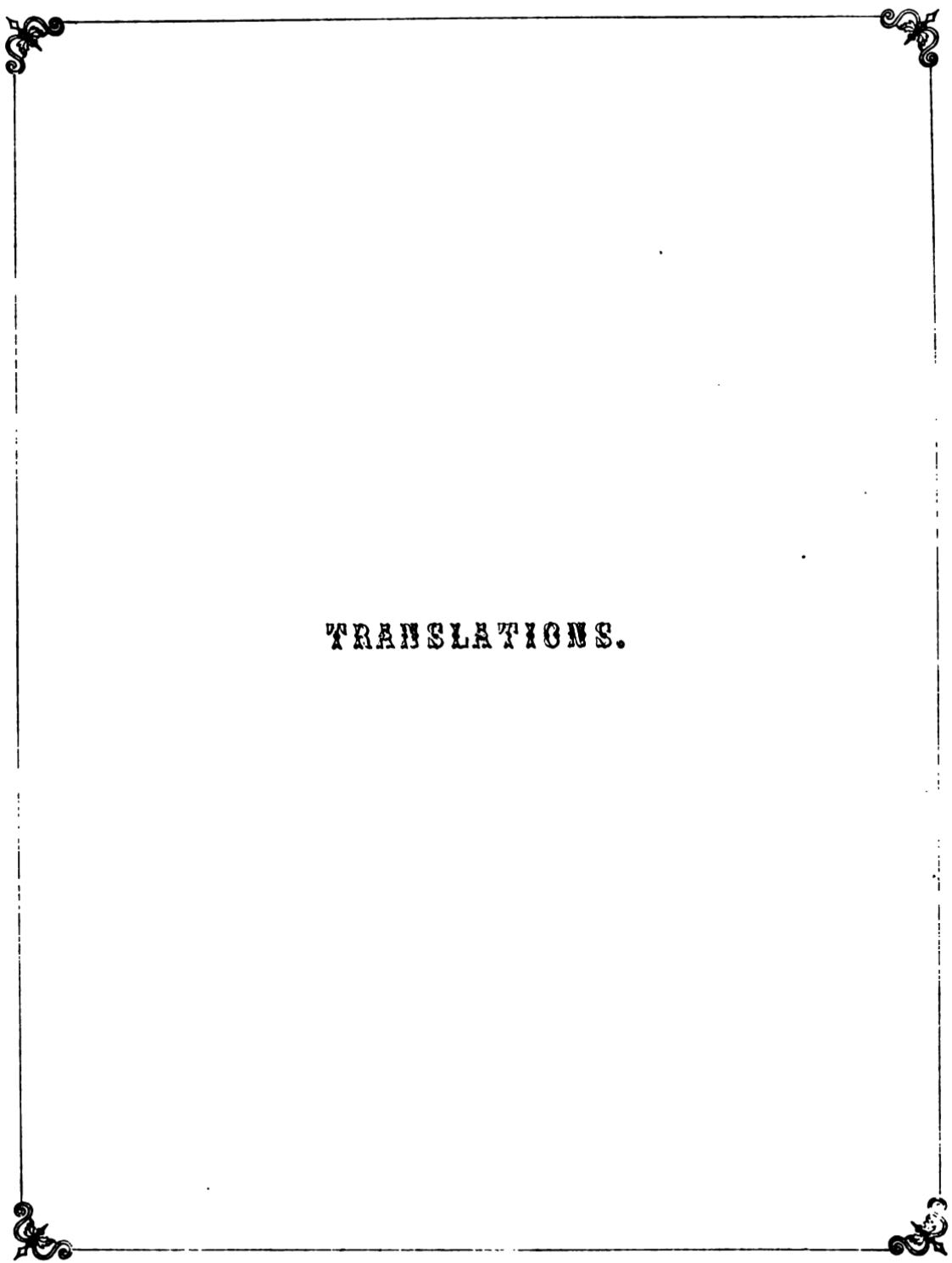
And the thoughts we mingled so gaily then,
Under the summer trees,
When the tide of romance flowed fresh and free
As the early morning breeze,
The mail-clad knight, and the laurelled bard,
And the hero's port sublime,—
How grandly they flashed thro' the mist of years
In the light of the dear old time!

We have travelled since then a little way
In the mighty realm of Thought,
We have bent our knees at the holy shrines
Where the great and wise have taught;—
We have hung entranced o'er History's page,
And the Poet's lofty rhyme,—
But I think our books are not quite so dear
As those of the dear old time!

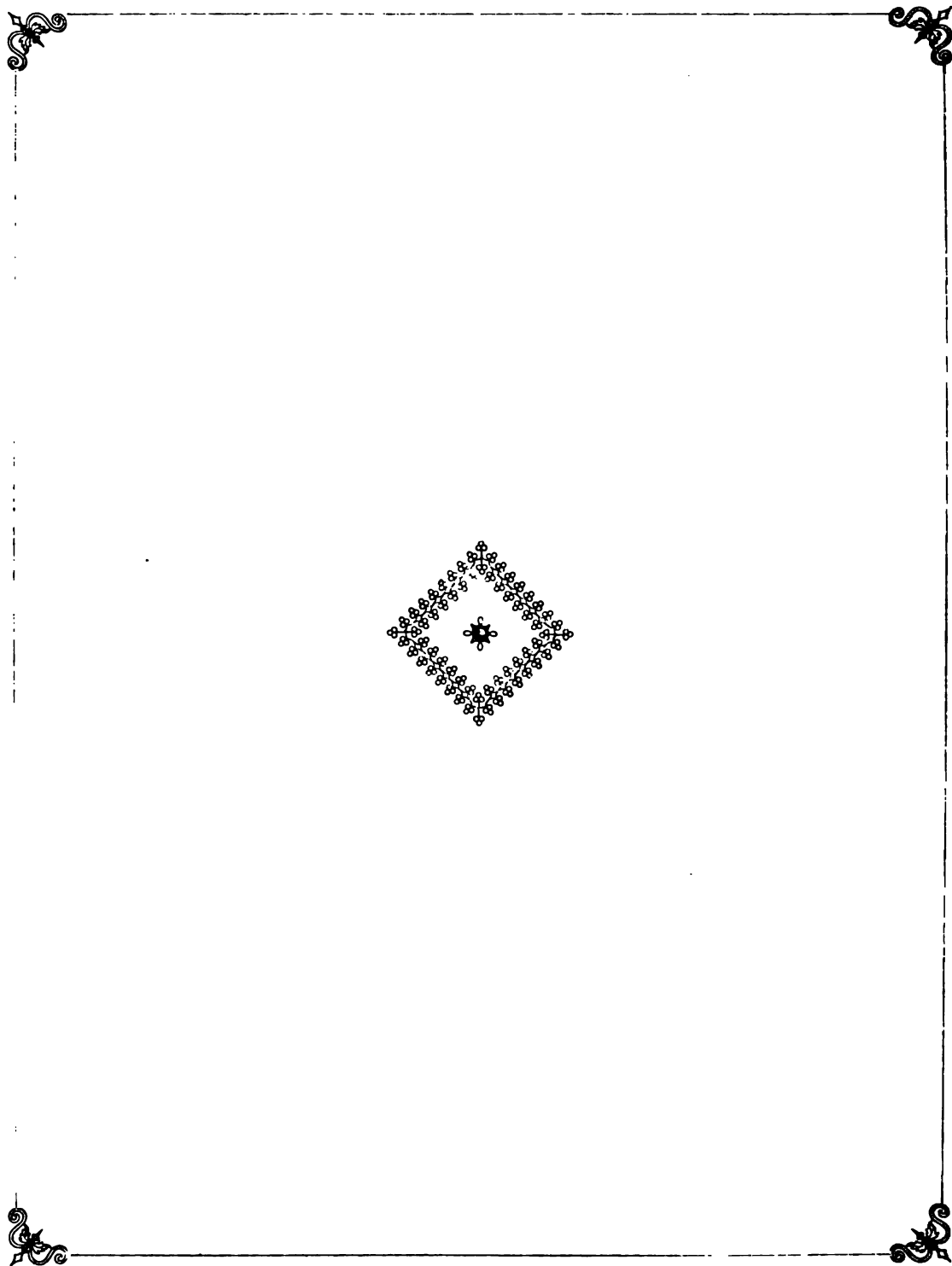
Ah me! the pride of the growing morn
Hath swept the sweet stars away,
But I hear the sound of the coming rain,
There are clouds in the sky to-day—
There's many a cloud-built castle fair,
And many a thought sublime,
Which have faded away like the morning stars
With the dreams of the dear old time.

But we will not grieve—if some light be gone,
There's enough remaining yet,
If the blossoms fall, on the drooping bough
The golden fruit is set;
And we cannot lose all the airs of balm
From that soft-enchanted clime,
While our hearts beat warm with the tenderness
And the love of the dear old time!





TRANSLATIONS.



The Poet's Morning Hymn.

(FROM TEGNER.)

GLORIOUS Orb, that from my view
Sank in purple light!
Thy ruddy beams I greet anew
O'er the mountain height.
Now, with awakening myriads let me pray,
Bathed in the golden haze of opening day!

Lord! let my spirit soar
To Thine eternal Throne!
Unbar the narrow door
That binds my senses down —
Let the bright forms that in Thy realm float by
Pass fresh and clear before my gifted eye!

The Poet's Morning Hymn.

In accents undefiled
To mortals let me teach
Thy precepts pure and mild—
Oh! grant me strength and speech,
That the sweet angels who around me throng
With truth and purity may fill my song!

Oh! teach me to disdain,
With spirit firm, not proud,
Thoughts rash, and light, and vain;
Nor heed the vulgar crowd
Who smile in scorn, though the rapt Poet's lay
Bear the bright impress of Thy lustrous day!

From white-lipped Poverty
Protect my humble home,
Give me my bread to-day,
And in the days to come;—
Lest Inspiration, lofty, pure, and fair,
Should e'er be stifled by intrusive Care!

Thou knowest, Lord! the love
My spirit bears to Thee;
In Thy bright courts above,
Oh! let my portion be,—
Then, Earth's proud fame, and gifts of treasured gold,
My steadfast heart from Thee will never hold!

The Poet's Morning Hymn.

265

I feel, my prayer is heard,
My praise to Thee ascends —
How sweetly sings the bird!
The blue sky o'er me bends,—
The air is full of angel harmonies,
And spirits whisper from the rustling trees.

Short is our earthly day,
Our task is hard and long!
Before us lies the way—
Up then! be firm and strong!
Earth! hear the voice of yonder azure field—
In light and Poesy is God revealed!





The Voice of Peace.

(FROM TEGNER.)

WHEN the great ones and the mighty
 Lord it o'er a fallen race,—
When brute force and stern oppression
 Seize on Freedom's holy place,—
When, by crushed and suffering peasants,
 Is the murderous arrow hurled,—
When the heart is filled with curses,—
 Then, Peace leaves the guilty world!

Day hath dawned in light and splendour,
 Peace and Pleasure smile on thee;
Hate not, for the eye of Heaven
 Thy most secret thoughts can see;
Evening comes, with moon and starlight—
 Eve and Peace aye sisters were—
Shun the voice of wrath and rancour,
 As thou wouldst the chill night air!



Judge not then, thy erring brother
Who from beaten paths hath strayed;
Canst thou tell what heavy burden
Fate, perchance, on him hath laid?
Canst thou tell, how oft, despairing,
With temptation he has striven?
Canst thou tell what prayers for succour,
Even now, he breathes to Heaven?

Thou who, for thy clamorous anger,
Claimest God's own high behest!
Think, our Father calls His children
All alike, to share His rest.
Hast thou told the deep and boundless
Treasures of Immensity?
Hast thou counted all the riches
Of long-suffering Charity?

Many names in prayer we give Him
Who is Father to us all,—
His decrees are high and changeless,—
Earthly things must fade and fall!
Who is nearest to His footstool?
Loves He simple virtue more
Than the pompous son of Science
Who parades his little lore?

The Voice of Peace.

Hear me, Father of all mercies,
Ruler of the land and sea!
Oh! shine forth, in love and bounty,
On the wretch who turns from Thee!
Teach him that which prompts and fosters
All things noble, true, and kind—
Peace on earth, to God submission,
Holy love to all mankind!

Cherish well the flame, by heaven
Kindled in thy fellow race!
Love and Peace descend together
From the Saviour's dwelling-place.
Of life's parable, the maxim
With a lowly heart expound;
Love and succour, bless and pardon
All God's creatures scattered round!

Art thou happy? Oh! in kindness
Share thy riches with the poor,
And the alms that thou dispensest
Shall increase thy slender store;
Open then thy hand, and freely—
Give to all, that blessings may
Circle round thy peaceful dwelling
Like the sun's transcendent ray.

The Voice of Peace.

269

Thou mayst tempted be, and lonely,—
 Wandering from thy road astray;
Through the bars of some cold dungeon
 Watching many a hopeless day;
Wrath and Vengeance sink and smoulder
 Like a half-extinguished brand,
But Forgiveness burns and brightens
 In the Saviour's bounteous hand.

Youth! whose star of hope is beaming
 O'er the unfound Paradise,—
From the summit of the mountain
 Look with kind, indulgent eyes—
From the fount of love undying
 Drink, ere Sorrow comes in tears;
Warm thy heart, ere thou descendest
 To the frozen vale of years!

Man! who standest, proud and happy,
 On Ambition's crazy height!
Oh! be generous and noble,
 Ere thy hair be streaked with white,—
Build thy house with patient labour,
 Build it in a peaceful land—
Give thy foes a kindly welcome,
 Warmly press each friendly hand!

The Voice of Peace.

When thy feeble steps shall lead thee
To the cold vault's narrow door,
Fearlessly then shalt thou venture
On the path untried before.
Knowest thou, to what distant region
Rolls Death's sad and silent wave?
But sweet spirits ever circle
Round the good man's quiet grave.

Scatter blessings then around thee,
While on earth thou hast thy home,
Calmly, o'er thy hopeful spirit,
Shall the last dread summons come.
Sorrow, shame, and stern reproaches
From thy death-bed far shall be,
Love and Happiness eternal
With their wings shall shadow thee!

Eternity.

(FROM TEGNER.)

THE sword of the mighty rules over the world,
Fame soars, like the eagle, on high,—
Yet oft from the ramparts the banner is hurled,
Death meets the proud bird of the sky.
The reign of Oppression but seldom can last,
Like a storm in the desert, its glories are past!

But Truth still survives, like a conquering chief,
Calm and bold in the midst of the strife;
Her children she guides, through temptation and grief,
To a peaceful and glorious life;
Through long-distant ages her voice shall prevail,
For Truth is eternal, and never can fail.

Right, too, is eternal; it cannot be crushed,
Though Tyranny menace it round;
When the world at the feet of a despot is hushed,
In the thoughts of the just is it found;—
By power proscribed and encompassed with art,
Its stronghold it rears in the Patriot's heart.

And the firm will, enshrined in the breast of the proud,
Prompts to valour and noble emprise,—
Right seizes its weapons, and Truth speaks aloud,
Till the nations in liberty rise;—
Whate'er on the altar of Freedom was laid
Like a bright sunbeam glitters through Lethe's cold shade.

And Poesy is not the breath of a flower,
The rainbow that charms us awhile—
Each beautiful thought o'er the dark grave hath power,
And brightens the world with a smile;
For Beauty is deathless—'mid pebbles and slime,
Her pure gold we find in the river of Time.

Seek Truth then in all things—let Right be thy guide,
Let the Beautiful reign o'er thy heart—
Though Folly and Error parade at their side,
From mankind will they never depart.
Like a churl, Time reclaims all that once he had given,
But Eternity pays us with treasures in heaven!



Solitude.

(FROM PUSHKINE.)

I GREET thee, oh, thou friendly Solitude!
Sister of Faith and Inspiration high!
In blessed indolence, in tranquil mood,
Here let my days glide by.

Yes! I am thine at last—from strife and keen vexation,
From Life's harsh tumults, do I fly to thee once more—
To the rapt ecstasy of holiest Contemplation,
The voice of summer fields, the old oak forests hoar!

I woo thee now, and oh! how gladly hasten
From the bright city and the festive throng!
'Mid thy green bowers with chastened heart I listen,
In the clear morning, to the wild bird's song.

It calls me forth to greet the rising day.

How rich in flowers the garden round me spreads!

The tall trees wave their rustling, shadowy heads—

The fresh green meadows and the new-mown hay—

The stream that murmurs through the pleasant land,
Creeps under bushes, through the valley glides,

To mix her bright waves with her sister tides—

A beauteous picture, drawn by God's own Hand!

Blue, deeply blue, before me the lake's clear waters lie,—

Fields of a thousand varied hues, and green hills form
its strand,—

With snowy sails, the fishing-boats go swiftly darting by,

Half hid beneath the glossy leaves, the cheerful hamlets lie,

And docile herds are ranging through the sunny pasture
land—

'Mid dashing spray the mill-wheel turns, a mimic water-
fall,—

Life, labour, hope, and blessing, brood o'er all!

Here, Vanity and trifling cares depart,

In Truth I learn my only bliss to find—

A solemn adoration from my heart


Drives the light thoughts and follies of our kind;

Their loud and insolent voice no more I hear,

For modest woe I shed a pitying tear;—

And, with bold arm and strong,
Right I maintain against triumphant Pride,
And rend the glittering robes of pomp, that hide
The weak and sinful throng.

To thee I turn, great Oracle of Time!
Comfort and Courage at thy side appear,—
In the dim twilight of thy haunts sublime
My spirit wakes, thy warning voice to hear.
It calls me from my long and useless dreaming,
With new-born strength my daily tasks I ply;
And the great thoughts which thou hast called to being,
Like corn seeds in my soul's deep chambers lie!



Song.

(FROM PUSHKINE.)

Oh! sing, sweet Lady! sing no more
Georgia's melancholy lays,—
They wake a dream, a mournful dream
Of distant homes, of happier days!
Of grief and pain, a spectral train,
With each soft cadence gather near;
The dreary steppes, the moonlit nights,
The well-known face, the child's first tear!

And one sweet phantom — when thou'rt mute,
At thy dear side it may not stay;—
Thy voice hath broke the spell — it comes
Once more, to summon me away.
Then sing, sweet Lady! sing no more
Georgia's melancholy lays,—
They wake a dream, a mournful dream
Of distant homes, of happier days!





The Angel.

(FROM THE SAME.)

WITH drooping head, at Eden's gate
An Angel stands, a form of light;
From the deep gulf of crime and hate
The demon wings his upward flight.

Spirit of doubt, and pride o'erthrown!
As on that form his dark eyes rest,
Remorse and shame, till then unknown,
Steal gently o'er his haughty breast.

"Sweet child of heaven! not in vain
Thy smile hath met this glance of mine;
Not all things earthly I disdain,
I hate not all that is divine!"







A Dream.

(FROM UHLAND.)

I DREAMED, upon a rocky height
In calm repose I lay,
'Twas close beside the ocean strand,—
Beneath me spread the fertile land,
And tossed the feathery spray.

I saw a stately galley, moored
In a little creek below,
Her coloured sails waved in the breeze,
Her prow impatient ploughed the seas,
As though she longed to go.

Down from the distant mountains came
A troop, with shouts of glee;
Like angels fair their vestments shone,
Each wore a glorious floral crown,
And hastened towards the sea.



First in the march, a noisy group
Of laughing children came ;
Then noble youths and maidens young
Who touched the lyre, and sweetly sung,
Or joined the merry game.

They called to the grey-haired seaman,—
“Fain would we sail with thee ;
We are the sprites of love and mirth,
We long to quit the darksome earth,
And from mankind to flee !”

He bade them welcome to his bark,
That bright and joyous train ;—
“Yet speak, ye dear ones ! of your kind,
Say, does not one remain behind
On mountain, grove, or plain ?”

“Our numbers are complete,” they cried,
“Haste, haste, we cannot stay !”—
The winds arose, the sails were spread,—
In the blue distance, vanished
Earth’s hopes and pleasures gay !





The Minstrel.

(FROM UHLAND.)

On the cold bier lieth the Minstrel now,
The song from his lip hath flown,
And a faded laurel decks the brow,
Where the light of Genius shone.

They have laid beside him his dying strain,
The sweetest and the last—
And his lyre—What touch shall wake again
The strings where his hand hath pass'd?

He sleepeth a calm and dreamless sleep,
But his songs reach every ear,
And they thrill the hearts of all who weep
By the Minstrel's early bier.



The Minstrel.

281

Now, many a year hath passed away ;
O'er his tomb the cypress grows,
And all who mourned for the bard's decay
Are hushed in their last repose.

Yet, as the spring, o'er moor and hill,
Brings health and vigour new,
In our distant age, lives the Minstrel still,
Immortal, wise, and true.

He unites the living and the dead,
For the grave hath no power to kill ;—
The past, whose tears o'er his grave were shed,
In his sweet verse liveth still.








(FROM DES KNABEN WUNDERHORN.)

THE dove, let loose from Noah's ark,
Hovered o'er waters wild and dark,
Nor soiled her snowy wing;
Back to the Patriarch she flew,
And in his bosom found anew,
The rest Earth could not bring.

So, to a world with sorrow fraught,
By God sustained, the Virgin brought,
Against her foes' array,
A soul too high, a mind too pure
The taint of evil to endure,—
Look on her face, and pray!







The Birds of Passage.

(FROM MARMIER'S TRANSLATION OF STAGNELIUS.)

THE birds are flying southward, they have left the Swedish
strand,
They are hasting on their small fleet wings to another
happier land,
And their voice comes softly, plaintively, across the ocean
bright—
“To what unknown and distant shore doth God direct our
flight?

“We loved the grand old Northern world in the joyous
summer-time,
We built with care our leafy nests beneath the shady
lime;
The wind sighed through our forest home with a strange
and fitful tone—
But now we hasten far away, to a land unloved, unknown.



"In the dark pine woods, how glorious, how beautiful was
night,
With her crown of stars and star-like flowers, and her
tresses long and bright!
And we joyed to hear her many tales, till the morning's
golden car
In a flood of gorgeous light appeared on the purple hills
afar.

"The green tree spread its shade abroad, and showered
down the dew
Like pearls upon the mossy grass, where the blushing
roses grew;
Now, the oak stands bare and leafless, and the rose is
lying low,
The tempest raves, the dewy turf is buried in the
snow.

"Why linger mid such gloomy scenes? The sun is
growing dim;
From Nature's grave what voice shall raise the loud
triumphal hymn?
The wings that God has given us, we will spread them
and depart,—
Hail to thee! hail, mysterious voice from the ocean's
mighty heart!"





The Birds of Passage.

285

'Twas thus the birds of passage sang, as they left our
sounding strand—
Soon will they rest amid the flowers of the happy
Southern land,
Where, mid groves of fragrant myrtles, the blue streamlet
murmurs by,
And the vineyards and the olive groves give back their
songs of joy.

Oh! weary heart that pineth with a vain and deep regret
When the Autumn blast sweeps hoarsely round, and thine
April sun hath set,
Think, the swallow finds a lovely home across the troubled
sea,
And, far beyond the silent grave, a bright land smiles
for thee!







The Last Cloud.

(FROM PUSHKINE.)

THE gloom is departing, the storm hath passed by,
Why alone dost thou linger, dark cloud in the sky!
Casting deep shades on the hedgerows so gay,
Saddening the brow of the young summer day?

Thou hast long veiled the heavens with thy dark leaden hue
That the swift forked lightnings broke flickering through,
And the voice of the thunder rolled over the plain,
And the thirsty sod drank in the loud dropping rain;

But the earth is at rest now, the storm hath passed by,
Leave us, oh! leave us, last cloud of the sky!
Let the breeze, mid the leaves of the rose trees at play,
From the bright realms of sunshine soon waft thee away!



The Cottage Maiden.

(FROM RUNEBERG.)

THE sun went down, and evening came, the evening calm
and mild,
Bathing in languid purple light the village and the wild ;
The toil of busy day was o'er, and, cheerful and content,
Back to their homes, in noisy groups light-hearted peasants
went.

A heavy burden had they borne, success their efforts crowned,
The foeman's routed hosts had fled, or strewed the crimson
ground,—
To battle went they forth at morn with drums and bugles wild,
And on the field of Victory the balmy evening smiled.

Close by the plain where armies met in strife that livelong
day,
A cottage stood, a quiet home, beside the winding way ;
And at its door a maiden sate, with sad and anxious eye,
Watching the bands of armed men that through the field
swept by.

She watched as one who seeks a friend, in sorrow and dismay,—
A deeper flush than sunset's glow upon her wet cheek lay,—
So motionless and still she sate, in her silent grief apart,
Ye might have heard, when all was hushed, the beating of her
heart.

And mournfully before her door she saw the crowd defile,
One deep and earnest question asked her lifted face the while;
No word she spoke, no name she breathed, yet frequent was
the sigh
That heaved her aching breast, and brought the moisture to
her eye.

But when the march was over, and silence came at last,
The fearful calm of dark suspense from the maiden's visage
pass'd;
She spake not, moved not,—in her hands she hid her fore-
head wan,
And large, warm tears across her cheek in gushing torrents ran.

“Why weepest thou, oh! maiden mine! when hope is budding
near?
O daughter! hear thy mother's words, and dry the starting
tear,—
He, whose loved form amidst the crowd thy watchful glance
hath sought,
He lives, for thy sake lives he yet,—on thee, my child! he
thought!

"He heard my prudent counsel, not in danger's paths to stray;
It was my parting word to him, when he hurried forth to-day;
Unwillingly he joined the host, nor fame nor triumph
sought,—

On hours of past and future bliss, on thee, my child! he
thought!"

Then tremblingly the maiden rose, as one who sudden hears
Of griefs that blast the troubled heart, and chill foreboding
fears;—

Once more across the plain she gazed, where lately raged the
fight,

Then passed along the winding lane, and vanished from the
sight.

Slowly the lagging hours went by, the night was waning fast,
And silver white the fleecy clouds o'er the dome of heaven
pass'd;—

"Where art thou, child?—with smiles of joy the coming
morning greet,

The rosy dawn once more shall bring thy lover to thy
feet!"

Reluctantly the maiden came, close to her mother's knee;
No tear was in her downcast eye, her step was firm and free,
But the hand she gave was icy cold, her voice was low and
weak,

And whiter than the fleecy clouds appeared her pallid cheek.

“Make me a grave, O Mother dear! my life hath felt the
blight,—

The man to whom my heart was given, like a craven left the
fight,—

On me he thought, and on himself,—thy warning voice
obeyed,

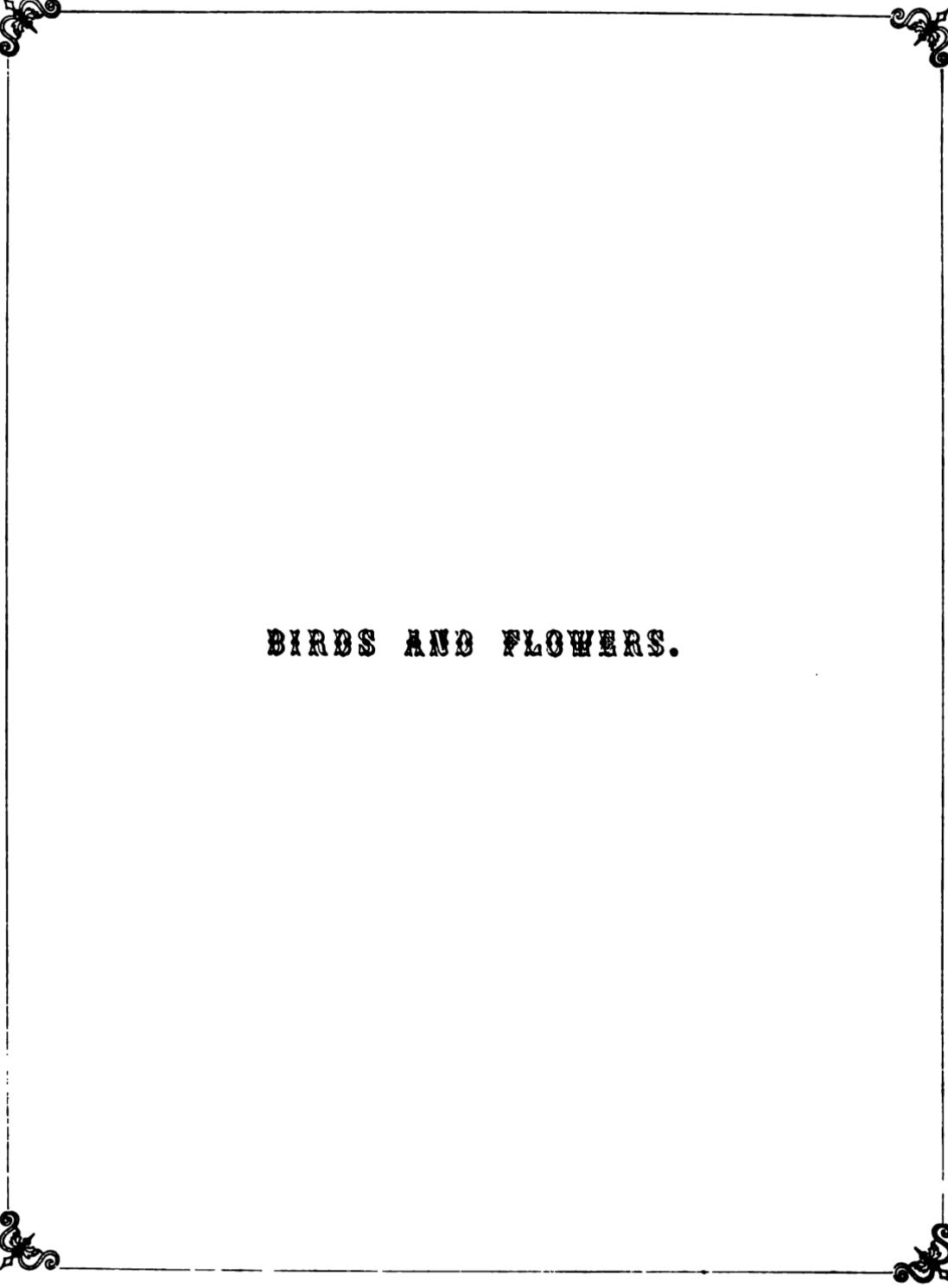
Deceived his noble comrades’ trust, his fatherland betrayed!

“I sought him mid the ghastly dead, till came the morning
grey—



Those well-known features found I not, mid all who round
me lay—

O Mother! to the silent tomb, from shame I fain would fly,
Among the slain I found him not, and therefore let me die!”





BIRDS AND FLOWERS.



"Sweet was the fancy of those antique ages
That put a heart in every stirring leaf,
Writing deep morals upon Nature's pages,
Turning sweet flowers into deathless sages,
To calm our joy and sanctify our grief!"

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.







Birds and Flowers.

BIRDS and Flowers ! Birds and Flowers !
Signs are ye of all sunny hours—
Of the insect-voices that murmur by,
Of the laughing earth, and the free blue sky—

The grassy dingles, and shady dells,
Where the cowslip blooms, and the gipsy dwells,—
The river, that calls from its bed of stone
To the whispering trees in the forest lone,—

The cot, round whose cheerful lattice twine
The early rose and the clustering vine,—
The lights and shadows, that veering pass
On a summer's day, o'er the new-mown grass !





Birds and Flowers! Birds and Flowers!
Types are ye of our own bright hours,—
Of the fount of tenderest love, which lies
In the full heart's inmost mysteries.

Thought, like the bird, from its rapid wing
Breaks the galling fetters that round it cling,
And soars aloft, over change and death,
Through the night of Time, to the dawn of Faith!

But the lowly flowers, that have their birth
In nooks and fields of the weeping earth,
Are memories, culled on Life's distant track,
Which, in serious hours, we oft call back.



In them are garnered the hopes and fears,
The sorrows and joys of departed years,—
But they soothe the spirit, and o'er it cast
Odours and shadows of things long past!



The Violet.

Is merry glad, the Violet
Comes forth to greet the spring,
But she hides among the waving grass,—
A young and timid thing!
The wild birds in the lavender bush
Sing in a merry tone
And the sweetest note of each cuckoo bird
Is meant for her alone.

The wind sweeps through the forest glade
Like a conqueror in the pride
It waves the flags of the merry sea,
But the voice of the waterfalls
And the voices of the mountains
And the voices of the birds and the bees
In the trembling and the rustling leaves
But the fragrant breath of the Violet
Is the sweetest and the truest.



Oh! the Nettle is a churlish plant,
He invades the forest bowers,
And he hides the modest child of Spring
From the eyes of her sister flowers—
Yet, as a shield from the pattering rain,
And the fierce sun's scorching heat,
His broad leaves spread o'er the drooping head
Of the Violet at his feet.

There are hearts that, like the Violet,
Shrink from the world's rude glare;
Ye find them not in the crowded halls,
Where wit and mirth repair;
But all lowly natures like themselves
In friendship with them dwell,
The truth they prize, and the love which lies
In the fond heart's secret cell.

Across Life's dreary waste they spread
Love's fairy diadem,
And the churlish natures of the earth
Grow gentle and kind to them;
And the whelming storm, that scatters wide
The gay and heartless throng,
But calls to mind the wealth, enshrined
Their souls' deep founts among.

The Violet.

297

Deal gently with those lowly hearts,
Though others pass them by
With a scornful smile, and a careless word,
And a cold, unfriendly eye;
For when thy head with grief is bowed,
And thy scanty locks are grey,
Faithful to thee those friends will be,
And fragrant in decay!







The Owl.

Most grave and solitary bird, perched on the Castle wall,
Where tremblingly the quivering leaves of pendent ivy
fall,—
With drooping wings, and staring eyes, like a gossip
chuckling o'er
A little bit of scandal she had never heard before!

So innocent and sage thou look'st, as if, enwrapped in
shade,
No tumult hadst thou ever caused, no pranks of mischief
played;
Yet many a tale of souls unblest o'er the dark earth
wandering free,
Of wizard grim and goblin pale, might we trace home to
thee.



Thy "goggle-eyes" have often scared whole households
with affright,
Peering like spectres through the glass at the murky dead
of night,
When maids aghast, by twos and threes, went trembling
off to bed,
Secured the bolted door, and drew the sheets above their
head!

A Gentleman thou surely art—too proud a thought to
waste
On modern homes and vulgar towns; thy true patrician
taste
In ruined halls and lonely towers prefers to dwell at ease,
With relics of departed times and musty pedigrees.

Thou lov'st the face of Nature too, when the garish sun
hath set—
When man hath left the silent fields, and the earth with
dew is wet;
On wings outstretched thou soarest then—oh! do I deem
thee right,
A Poet and Philosopher, thou hoary Anchorite!

The Moss Rose.

HAST thou e'er seen a maiden, newly dight
In festal robes, and marked the sudden blush
Of modesty and joy, with conscious flush
Her damask cheek suffusing?—from the light
And noise of crowded halls awhile she shrinks:
Ev'n so, yon flower, upon her leafy stem,
So young, so fair, the parterre's choicest gem,
From strangers seeks her charms to hide, methinks.
Her buds, half blown, from out their dewy veil
Of freshest moss, a perfume sweet exhale,
Soft as the whispered sigh of dreaming fays—
Oh! thus across the heart oppressed, o'erworn
By constant toil and care, at times are borne
The blessed memories of happier days!





The Swallow.

'Tis the end of chill September,
Leaves are dropping on the ground,
And the wind sweeps through the branches
With a strange and mournful sound ;

Cheerless lie the fields deserted,
Cheerless seems the dull grey sky,
While, from hall and farmstead trooping,
Birds of passage homeward fly—

Hasting towards a sunnier climate
Where no frost hath dimmed the flowers—
From life's fitful toil and sorrow,
Oh! could such a flight be ours!



The Swallow.

Could it be?—and hath not each one
In his heart a world unseen,
Where, though troubles round him gather,
All is tranquil, all serene?

Thought and Study, peace and profit
To their gentle votaries give;
Sweet Religion, pure and patient,
Bids her sister Hope revive;

Fancy sheds her glorious lustre
O'er the pathway bleak and cold,
Like the sun above the hilltops,
Turning all the mists to gold!

Seek not outward consolations,
When thy wintry days begin;
Love and Friendship cannot cheer thee,
If the void be felt within.

In thy breast, by God implanted,
Wells a fountain fresh and pure,—
Drink then of its living waters,
Learn to struggle and endure!

The Swallow.

303

There, a flame of love undying
Burns with calm and quenchless ray,—
Let it guide thy spirit upward,
To the cloudless peaceful day!



Then go forth, refreshed and strengthened,
Bid Grief's icy clouds depart,
Shed around thy household circle
Summer from thine own warm heart!





Exotiqs.

GAY courtiers are ye to the Queen of Flowers,
In robes of quaint device and gorgeous hue;
The free and healthful breeze ye never knew,
That stirs the rich leaves of our forest bowers;
Of Childhood's merry days ye do not speak;
Emblems are ye of pomp and regal state,
Splendours that make the lone heart desolate,
And chase the bright smile from the pallid cheek.
For ye disdain the banks of lowly thyme,
And shady haunts where, from the woodbine wreaths,
Delicious odours on the winds are flung—
Yet are ye welcome to our chilly clime,
For beautiful is every voice that breathes
The name of God, though in a foreign tongue!



The Dove.

BIRD of the gentle breast!
Emblem of Peace and Rest!
In the lone forest thou lovest to dwell,
Where the wild violets bloom,
And the tall waving broom
Sheds its gold clusters on upland and dell.

Through green leaves overhead,
Softly the light is shed
On the bright moss and the oaks' giant stems;
And the small brooks that pass
Through the long, tangled grass,
Dance in the sunshine, and sparkle like gems.

Nought breaks the solitude
Of the dim, pleasant wood,
Save the faint chime of the far Sabbath bell;
And peals of laughter sweet,
When merry children meet,
Gathering the crocus and red pimpernel.

The Dove.

Murmuring drowsily,
On flies the honey-bee,
And the rose greeteth his kiss with a smile;
And the proud crested trees
Bow, when the fickle breeze
In their rich foliage lingers awhile.

Gently the leaves are stirred,
And thy sweet voice is heard,
Rising in melody, O brooding Dove!
Till every sound is stilled,
And the hushed air is filled
With the sweet incense of Music and Love!

Blessed is he who dwells
Far from the world's cold spells,
Breathes the pure mountain air, treads the smooth sod;
Who, from his earliest youth,
Learneth this mighty truth,
That the green solitudes lead us to God!

The Lily of the Valley.

A FLOWER there is, of soft and fragrant breath,
Pure as the thoughts of some devoted Nun;
Its white and delicate bells, that shrink beneath
The coronal of leaves that o'er them wreath,
A lesson teach, a high and solemn one!

Yes! 'tis a consecrated flower!—for He,
Who to a sinful world Himself revealed,
And drained the bitterest cup of misery,—
To check the groans of murmuring Poverty,
Sweet counsels drew from lilies of the field!



And ever since that hour, to Christian eyes
Far lovelier that fragile thing appears,
Than plants that flaunt them in the richest dyes
That Nature yields, or boasted Art supplies—
A patient mourner, beautiful in tears!

A balm there is, of healthful vigour, lent
The flagging pinions of the soul to raise,—
A gleam of pious hope and comfort, sent
To clear the brow of pining Discontent,
And fill the drooping heart with faith and praise.



The Swan.

LIKE a large water-lily on a lake
Transparent, see the Swan in beauty glide;
A virgin lustre, from her pearly side
She casts upon the waters, and doth make
Them placid as herself. — Around her grow
Tall rushes, by the veering zephyrs swayed
Inconstant, and they cast a transient shade,
Which dims, but cannot soil, those wings of snow.
Majestic bird! oh! could my heart like thee,
Fearless and firm, on perilous journey bound,
With hallowed thoughts and gentlest wishes crowned,
Sail on, and on, across Life's stormy sea,
Though troubles came, and evil hedged it round,
Serene and safe in its own purity!



Wild Flowers.

THEY are springing up mid the forest bowers,
In their radiant beauty, the fresh Wild Flowers!
In the winding lanes, by the river's bed,
O'er the meadows wide are their riches spread;
Making the paths and the hedgerows bright
With wreaths of purple, and gold, and white,
O'er whose petals, bare to the glowing sky,
Hang the bee, and the wandering butterfly!

Some are hiding, like cloistered maids,
In the farthest depths of the lonely glades,
And the pearly tears of the youthful morn
Their drooping chalices adorn;
And some on the banks, where the sun loves best
In the light of his golden beams to rest,
Are listening with rapture, the whole day long,
To the rich, sweet notes of the robin's song.

Gems of the forest! what treasures rare
May with your various tints compare?
The pearls that far down in the ocean shine,
Or the emerald, torn from the distant mine?
They deck, in many a festive place,
The queenlike form, and the beauteous face,—
Ye crown the wastes and the dewy sod
With a diadem fresh from the hand of God!

The Poet loves in your leaves to trace
The steps of the tiny Elfin race,
And to call back the days when, in copses lone,
The velvet moss was the fairies' throne;
When the Dryad's oak, and the Naiad's grot
Hallowed each green, sequestered spot,—
And the crowding thoughts of his fertile brain
People the haunted woods again.

The child, in whose busy fancies lie
The germs of creative Poesy,—
Doth he not joy, in the grassy dell,
To cull the primrose and blue harebell,
Returning laden, at evening hour,
With the fragrant spoils of heath and bower?—
Joy deeper and purer than ever again
His heart shall greet in a world of pain!

And oh! when the days of sorrow come,
When strangers dwell in the once-loved home,—
When the kindred footsteps that with him trod
The flowery earth, rest beneath the sod,—
When the voices that gaily laughed of yore,
Respond to his frequent call no more,—
Thoughts sad, yet sweet, of those vanished hours,
Ye waft o'er his spirit, ye fair Wild Flowers!

Thou who hast struggled and toiled in vain,
Who hast felt the blast of the world's disdain,
Who hast seen all thy joyous day-dreams fade,
Thine early friends in the churchyard laid,
And hast lost, in the tumult of hopes and fears,
The warm, fresh heart of thy happier years,—
Wouldst thou break the chain that still binds thee fast?
Wouldst thou call back the joys of the sinless past?

Oh! come to the woods, and with docile ear
The friendly teachings of Nature hear;
Learn to pardon and love mankind,
To suffer with patient and quiet mind;
And the stern, proud feelings, the bitter strife,
The toils and trials of busy life,
Shall melt from thy heart like an April shower,
At the fragrant breath of one sweet Wild Flower!

The Falcon.

PERCHED on an old tree's gnarled and mossy bough,
As though he longed once more aloft to spring,
With folded wings the Falcon resteth now,
Mid glossy leaves, and many a pleasant thing—
He rests, but like a soldier, in whose hand
The spear and javelin are gleaming still,
Awaiting but the bugle's shrill command,
Their fierce and deadly mission to fulfil.
Erelong, the lark within her nest shall quail,
When those swift pinions cleave the yielding air,
And the green summer leaves shall fall like hail,
Startling beneath the ferns the crouching hare;
And cries of terror, in the calm glades heard,
Proclaim the triumph of the Warrior Bird!

The Rowan Tree.

I DEARLY love the Rowan Tree! Among the woods it grew,
Where free as air, the merry days of careless Childhood flew ;
What peals of joyous laughter rang through the pleasant
forest shade!

What noisy games, with loving friends, around its stem we
played!

Of studious hours it speaketh too, of books I loved so well,
Of daily lessons, conned with care in many a quiet dell,—
While dreams of Love and Poesy, Romance with all her train
Of pomp and by-gone Chivalry, went floating through my
brain.

I dearly love the Rowan Tree! I love the plaintive song
That tells what sweet and saddening thoughts to its drooping
leaves belong;

I heard it first in foreign lands, and it filled my heart with
pain,

With yearnings for the native air I might not breathe again!

'Twas sung by one, who in our joy or sadness bore a part,
A maiden loving, fair and good—a Sister of the heart!
And when I see the graceful boughs 'neath their scarlet
clusters bend,
It wings my thoughts again to her, my dear and gentle
Friend!

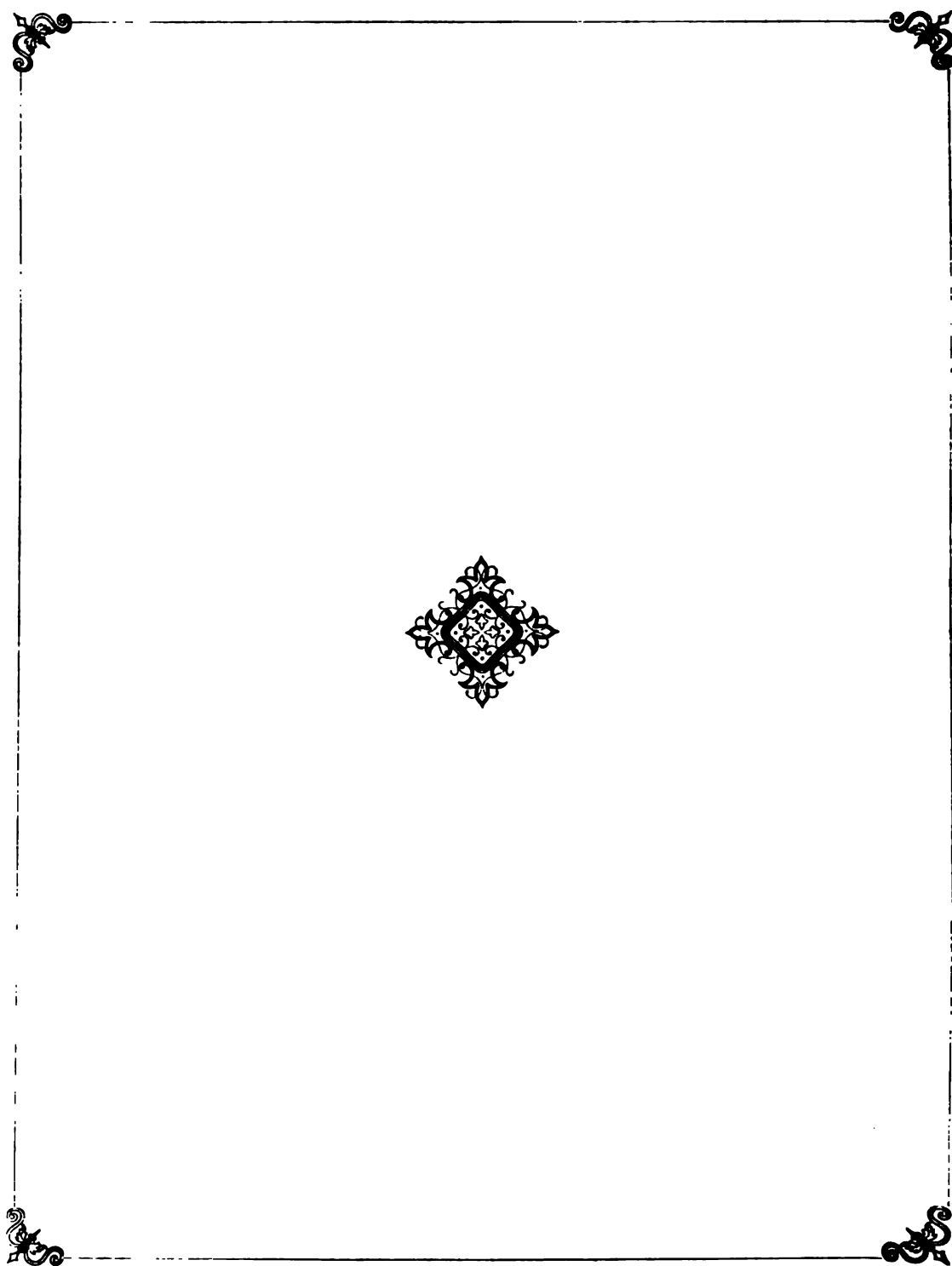
I dearly love the Rowan Tree! It ever brings to mind
The present, cheerful and content, with distant storms
combined;
Serene and safe, in happy ease I muse upon the past,
Recalling many a by-gone scene, in faithful Memory glass'd;—
True! sorrows deep and manifold my weary heart hath known,
But many rays of hope and love o'er the darkest hours were
thrown,—
The sun hath burst through drifting clouds that hid the azure
dome,
And my roving bark is anchored now, in a happy English
home!

Christmas, 1854.





MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.



Ex Voto.

A pious thought it was, when pilgrims wandered
In by-gone ages, over hallowed ground,
At some famed Altar vows and prayers they rendered,
And the rich gifts of life and healing found;

Chaplets of flowers they wove, ere they departed,
And hung them on the consecrated wall,
That those who came, depressed and broken-hearted,
Might learn like them to pray, and hope through all!

A pilgrim I, with new and strange emotion,
Turning from scenes where many an hour hath pass'd,
Pausing awhile to breathe, in fond devotion,
One parting word, one sad farewell—the last!

What days of silent grief, what vain endeavours,
And throngs of sad forebodings, Memory brings!
The storm is hushed now, but my heart still quivers
To the rough wind that lately swept its strings.

A Friend wert thou—in scenes of anguish soothing
My troubled spirit with untiring care,—
A blessed Star, mid tempests calmly beaming—
A hallowed shrine to me, O House of Prayer!

Hallowed by thoughts that, like a white-winged sea-bird,
Shed gleams of brightness o'er my darkened hours,—
By glorious hopes that led the spirit upward,—
Sweet as the dew of eve to drooping flowers!

By words of solemn counsel gently spoken,—
By grateful feelings with each prayer entwined,—
Oh! may their fragrance linger yet unbroken,
In the deep chambers of my soul enshrined!

Bright days of summer, when the lime-tree's shadow
Fell on the churchyard grass, so cool and calm,
While on the soft air's wing, through porch and window,
Floated the accents of the holy Psalm.

Ah! never more, beneath those shady lindens,
With willing haste, my footsteps shall repair;
Yet still, when sound the chimes on Sabbath mornings,
My heart, I know, will often worship there!

It needs no pictured form, no fancied semblance,
To paint thine image to my distant eye;—
While life remains, thy name, in my remembrance,
Is linked with holiest thoughts that cannot die.

Long be thy courts with worshippers replenished!
Long may thy walls to sacred anthems sound!
And lips, whose accents by the poor are cherished,
Spread the "glad tidings" of Salvation round!

Here may the mourner come, to God revealing
Each blighting grief, each throe of mortal pain,—
And find, before thy holy Altar kneeling,
That peace and comfort none e'er sought in vain!

And oh! may He, whose powerful arm defendeth
His chosen Church from Error's deadliest shock,
Accept each prayer that from thine aisles ascendeth,
Blessing alike the Pastor and his flock!

LIMEHOUSE, 24th June, 1854.





Written in an old Family Bible.

SINCE first thy words, O Sacred Volume! brought
Comfort and hope to cheer the sons of men,
O'er thee have rolled, with change and sorrow fraught,
Some fourscore years and ten!

And, couldst thou speak, what tales of social joys,
Or mournful vigils, would thy leaves unfold—
Tales of rich hopes that Time's rude touch destroys,
Fond hearts that now are cold!

Oft, by its Mother's side, hath Childhood knelt,
And lisped, with faltering tongue, its early vow,
While shades of solemn reverence, dimly felt,
Stole o'er the fair young brow,—



And chastened hearts thy promises have read,
Folding in prayer the tremulous hands of Age,—
The dim eyes filled with tears,—the hoary head
Bowed o'er the sacred page.

Here, Joy her full and bursting heart hath poured,
Blessing the generous Hand that freely gave—
Death's pallid lips have called upon the Lord,
"Omnipotent to save!"

Sorrow hath steeped thy leaves with many a tear,
When threatening clouds the smiling Heaven o'ercast—
Found she not balm for every trembling fear,
Shelter from every blast?

Now, all hath ceased—the hopes, the griefs of yore,
In the dark grave have found a resting-place;
Like waves that, ebbing from the lone sea-shore,
Depart, and leave no trace.

But thou remainest—like a jutting rock,
Whose proud crest towers above the waters high,
Lifting, alike through calm and tempest-shock,
A beacon towards the sky!

322 *Written in an old Family Bible.*

And, when these lips are mute, this hand is cold,—
Life's tumult past, its fitful journey o'er,—
When vain regrets and yearnings manifold
Can vex this heart no more,—

Smiling at characters so quaint and strange,
Others thy leaves will scan with curious mien,
Or muse perchance, on all the wondrous change
Thy yellowing page hath seen.

Oh! speak to them, as thou to me hast done,
Of Faith, whose rays the darkest clouds illumine,—
Of pure and perfect bliss, of triumphs won,
Of Life beyond the tomb!

When doubts and spectral fears their sad hearts fill,
When hopes depart, and earthly joys decay,—
Tell them, the Word of God abideth still,
And shall not pass away!

August 28th, 1854.



On Reading the Works of Hartley Coleridge.

CLOSE we the book — nor let us harshly blame
The workings of the mind that here hath stored
Imperishable wealth! Not ours to frame
Strict censure for the sins so oft deplored
By the meek soul, whose thoughts attuned were
To sweet accords of penitence and prayer!

The grave hath closed above him; — its calm shroud
O'er the long tale of sorrow hath been cast, —
The heart, by many a sore temptation bowed,
And worn with grief, sleeps peacefully at last, —
Like a fair infant, lulled to gentle rest,
After long weeping, on its mother's breast!

His faults are past, and, as we trust, forgiven —
His virtues live, immortal, and inspire
With light and music from their native Heaven,
The silvery accents of his gifted lyre;
For tenderness and beauty half divine
Swell the rich cadence of each thoughtful line.

324 On Reading the Works of Bartley Coleridge.

High hopes, rare talents, God on him bestowed ;
Nor were they wholly lost in idle slumbers,—
Rich strains of Genius from his young lips flowed,
Clothing great truths in soft, melodious numbers,
Quaint sallies that in laughter had their birth,
And sorrow, blending with each song of mirth.

Faith too was there—midst grief and trial, cleaving
The “vast void sky” with strong and rapid wings,—
And love, sweet wreaths of fairest blossoms weaving
Around all beautiful, all graceful things,—
The broad and slumbering lake, the mountain wild,
The sparkling fount, the young and sinless child.

Oh! who that loves to linger by the stream,
And through the trees that grace its reedy side,
Hear its soft voice, and watch the silvery gleam
Of the pure waters as they onward glide,
Thinks of the dark and lonely cave, where first
From Earth’s deep heart the prisoned fountain burst?

E’en thus, the Poet, from a breaking heart
Too often pours rich gems of feeling forth,
Sends through the world a stream of fostering Art
Which nourisheth each root of native worth,—
And few remember, when his song they praise,
What want or sorrow steeped his weary days!

On Reading the Works of Hartley Coleridge. 325

Gladly, O Christian Poet! do we yield
Our hearts to thee, and wander, as we read,
Through the green lane, and by the sunny field,—
And gather from the wood and fertile mead,
And the sweet rill whose waters past us roll,
Bright thoughts, to cheer the “winter of the soul.”

A child of Nature wert thou—every line
Bursts wild and fresh, as note of woodland bird,
Fraught with sweet fantasies, and hopes that shine
In each frail flower, and in the woods are heard,
And to the earth, and sky, and wave impart
The healthful lustre of a warm, true heart.

Oblivion soon shall roll her whelming wave
O'er many a bard that now to Fame is dear;
Yet shall she spare the flowers that deck thy grave,
And to long ages shall thy name appear
Like some bright star, that, o'er a desert way,
Guides the lone pilgrim to the dawn of day!

13th October, 1854.





To My Mother.

ANOTHER year revolving fast,
Hath brought thy natal morn again,—
Another year is with the past,
Years full of hopes too bright to last,
Or fraught with mortal pain.

A few years since, this happy day
Was sign of joy to me;
Then, flowers bloomed fresh around my way,
And fond Hope's bright, delusive ray
Shone on Youth's quiet sea.

Though times are changed, we are the same,
Alike in woe or mirth;
Upon our love thou hast a claim,
There is a spell in thy dear name,
Dearer than aught on earth!



To My Mother.

327

To be a comfort to thy heart,
A source of joy to thee—
Oh! may such be my future part,—
To bid no tear of sorrow start
To those dear eyes for me!

Calm be the course of thy future years,
And bright be thy evening sun!
Though the hues of morning are quenched in tears,
Yet peaceful the rosy cloud appears
Ere the day's last hour is done.

May a Heavenly Father be thy guide
O'er Life's dark and troubled foam,—
Lightly and safe, may thy frail bark glide,
Over a smooth, unruffled tide,
Till it reach a heavenly home!

PARIS, 8th March, 1847.







A Dirge.

COME back, beloved! come back!
Behold my tears,
Have they not power to reach thy heavenward track?
Return! Return! and oh! with thee bring back
Those happy years
When we two roved together hand in hand,
Amid the forests of our Fatherland—
Oh! perishable hours
Of bright, unwasted powers!
No cares oppressed our hearts, no griefs, no fears!

How fondly Memory traces o'er
Our pleasures past!
And points to words ne'er marked before,
To hopes and rainbow dreams of yore,
That might not last!



A Dirge.

329

Time sped along his rapid flight,
Those joyous dreams soon sunk in night—
 Yet did they leave one charm,
 One blessed soothing balm,
In thy dear smile my heart beheld its best thoughts glass'd!

But now, Death's hand hath bound thee
 In the dark tomb,
Its rayless night hath fallen close around thee;
The blighting touch of grief once more hath found me,—
 And the sad gloom
That falls upon the heart whence hope hath flown,
And left us in our dreary path alone!
 Return! Return again!
 Can words express the pain
That racks this bursting heart, now thou indeed art gone?

I watched beside thy bed,
 Thy bed of death!
My trembling hand sustained thy drooping head,
When noiselessly from thy pale lip had fled
 The parting breath;
Upon thy cheek my last fond kiss was pressed
Ere the dark coffin closed above thy breast;
 Mine was the midnight watch,
 The slightest sound to catch
That might have told my heart thou yet hadst breath!

In vain the mourner's breast
 Would seek relief!—
Never on earth will they again find rest,
Upon whose blighted years hath darkly pressed
 A cureless grief!
Say, what must be my future lot?
To strew with flowers this mournful spot,
 And through long, lonely years
 Of silence and of tears,
To mourn the hopes of Youth, so beautiful, so brief!

1847.







Old Hildebrand.

OLD Hildebrand! Old Hildebrand!

He hath mounted his charger good,
He is bound for the far-off Syrian land,
To fight for the Holy Rood;
But his falcon eye hath a gentler look,
And his voice a tone more mild,
As he bids farewell to his winsome dame,
And blesses his infant child:
"Oh, Lady mine—may the Saints above
Watch o'er my babe and thee,
Preserve ye both from grief and harm,
And keep thee aye true to me!"

Old Hildebrand! Old Hildebrand!

Seven years are past and gone;
His brow is dark, and the joyous smile
From the hero's lip hath flown—



"Thy Lady," they said, "for a beardless youth
Hath broken her plighted vow,
And the withering cloud of shame must rest
On thy father's mansion now!"
Then the warrior's plume was ever seen
In the thickest of the fight,—
But Death laid the young and the happy low,
And passed by the careworn Knight!

Old Hildebrand! Old Hildebrand!
He is resting beside the well,
Where the waters fall with a silvery sound,
And the river-fairies dwell:
"Oh! rest with us—there is joy and peace
Under the greenwood bough,
And sweet are the garlands of deathless bay
That we twine for the victor's brow!"
"Talk not to me of rest or joy,
Or glories that wait the brave—
I will look once more on the False One's face,
And hide me in the grave!"

Old Hildebrand! Old Hildebrand!
He hath gained the Castle door,
And he thinks with a sigh on his blighted hopes,
And the happy days of yore.

A maiden sits by the Gothic porch,
 With a cheek of the rose's hue,
 Her locks are like threads of the Orient gold,
 And her eye like the heavens blue :
 "Now who art thou of the saintlike brow,
 And the calm yet pensive mood?
 Thy Sire, I ween, is a gallant Knight,
 And thy Mother fair and good!"

Old Hildebrand! Old Hildebrand!
 The colour hath left his cheek,
 And the voice that rose high in the stormy fight
 Now soundeth faint and weak.
 "My Sire is fighting for Salem's shrine,
 And his arm is stout and strong;
 But my Mother sits in her lonely bower,
 Sighing the whole day long.
 Often she speaks of his glorious deeds,
 And weeps till her eyes are dim,
 And when the wind through the night roars loud,
 She waketh, to pray for him!"

Old Hildebrand! Old Hildebrand!
 Gone is his wrathful pride;
 With quivering lip, he bendeth low
 At the gentle Lady's side:

"I have courted Death on the battlefield,
I have met with toil and care,—
But the thought that thy heart had forsaken mine,
Was harder than these to bear!
I have seen the gems of the gorgeous East,
And pearls from the crystal sea,
But the tear that steals o'er thy damask cheek
Is dearest of all to me!"





On the Death of General Palafox.

OPEN your gates, ye Cathedral towers!
Priests, chant the requiem loud!
For a free soul is gone to the heavenly bowers,
A soldier seeks rest in his shroud!

On through the town bear the glorious dead,
With many a funeral strain;
Low in the dust lies the warrior's head,
And the hand that has conquered for Spain!

Calm be his rest 'neath the funeral pall,
Bright be the world he has entered!
For in him doth the best of Spain's warriors fall,
In him were proud memories centred!



Nobly and well, when the dark hours came,
The patriot's falchion he wielded;
His arm, through long vigils of sorrow and shame,
Spain's laws and her liberties shielded.

Her children now listen, with passionless breast,
To the voice of her murmuring fountains,—
She hath exiled the true hearts with whom she was bless'd,
And her freemen have fled to the mountains!

Yet, bare the bright blade o'er that spiritless clay!
Remember proud names without number!
Hath the fire of Rodrigo departed for aye
From the land where his ashes still slumber?

Hath the Lion been wrapped in so deathlike a sleep,
That he heard not the voice of the foe?
Awake, oh! bright Spain! from dishonour to keep
The laurels that twine round thy brow!



1847.



The Spirit's Call.

LONG thy soul hath loathed the gleam
Of gaudy Fashion's pompous dream,
And thy spirit sighs in vain
For Childhood's careless hours again,
And thy lonely heart doth pine
For simple joys that once were thine;—
Yet silver lamps are beaming o'er thee,
Courtiers bow the knee before thee—
Lady! why that frequent start?
Pomp has no charms for the broken heart!

There is many a costly gem
In thy regal diadem;
In thy vast and princely halls,
Loud the voice of Pleasure calls;



The Spirit's Call.

Beauty's smile, and Music's strain
Strive to cheer thee, but in vain!
Oft thy bosom heaves a sigh,
And the tears rise to thine eye—
Lady! why that frequent start?
Earth has no rest for the broken heart!

Leave then, leave the festive train,
Glittering pageants false and vain!
Come! eternal joys are breaking!
Rise! for Heaven attends thy waking.
Fling away thy crown of gold,—
Loose thy ermine mantle's fold,—
Bid the earth a long farewell,—
Come with us in Heaven to dwell,—
Haste, oh! haste thee to depart—
Heaven has balm for the broken heart!

1847.

An Episode of Moscow.

[Suggested by a beautiful Painting in the Gallery of the Luxembourg, representing a dragoon of the Imperial Guard abandoned by the retreating army.]

He stood alone on the snowy plain,
The wintry winds rose high;
And sadly he viewed the departing train,
Who had left him there to die.

The horse that had borne him through the fight
Stood by, with drooping head;
The hand of Death o'er his eye of light
A gathering film had spread.

The soldier looked o'er the desert white,
Then turned a lingering glance
To the army, that marched with pennons bright
Towards the sunny land of France.

At times, on the wings of the rising blast,
Came their voices' murmuring swell;
And alone, in the midst of the dreary waste,
He breathed forth his last farewell:

“And go,” he cried, “in many a home
To bid glad thoughts arise,
And wipe the falling tears of gloom
From many a parent’s eyes.

“Go to the feast of the proud and the brave,
Where men shall bid ye tell
Of the soldiers who found a foreign grave
On the fields where they fought so well.

“And if, when friends are around ye met,
Some pensive face ye see,
If for my sake some eyes be wet,—
If some voice should ask for me—

“Oh! say that I sleep mid the chilling air
That blows o’er the Russian strand,
And tell them my latest, my fondest prayer,
Was breathed for my native land!

“Go! go! with the wreaths of your well-earned fame!
Joy round your pathway dwell!
Warm hearts, bright faces, hail your name!
Old comrades, fare ye well!”

1848.

A Song of Flowers.

THE rosy tints of morning shine upon the Eastern sea;
Come forth, come forth, O sister mine! I have culled
sweet flowers for thee,—
Wreaths of the snowy jasmine, as fragrant as 'tis fair,
And blushing roses wet with dew, to deck thy golden
hair.

I have sought the crystal fountain, where dwell the lotos
flowers,
I have brought the fair anemone from the greenwood's
quiet bowers,
Forget-me-not, and speedwell, and amid my garland twine
The golden-coloured king-cup, and the graceful eglantine.

I have buds of pallid myrtle with their leaves of darksome
green,
The lily, pure and passionless, the garden's stately queen—
All flowers the Summer views with pride, the poet loves
to see,
That lend sweet odours to the air, food to the roving bee.

The sky is calm, without a cloud,—the sun is shining
bright,
The dewy leaves are glistening like diamonds in the light,
On every side the birds awake, to pour their cheerful
strain,
And Summer comes, in beauty clad, across the sunny
plain.

1848.



Evening.

BEHOLD the moon, now beaming on the wave,
Shedding around her soft, mysterious light,
Tinging the gloomy rock, the frowning cave,
Adding fresh beauty to the star-crowned night !
'Tis like an angel, with his broad wings furled,
Gazing in pity on a fallen world !

In such an hour, methinks, our erring sire
Turned his last gaze on Eden's flowery plain,
And wandered forth, to yearn, with vain desire,
For the deep peace of those sweet groves again ;
When first on earth despair and sin began,
And trees wept incense for deluded man !



In such an hour, methinks, some angel guest
Mourned for the blight that fell on that fair scene,
And gentle pity filled his heavenly breast,
As, thinking of the bliss that once had been,
O'er human guilt he shed a pitying tear,
Then spread his pinions towards a brighter sphere.



The Wild Hyacinth.

BRING me not that gaudy wreath
Where Flora's richest dyes are blended,—
Fragrant odours from them breathe,
But their charms will soon be ended.
Twine them round the sunny brow
Of laughing youth, of thoughtless glee;
Theirs are hopes and joys enow,—
But offer not that wreath to me!

Give me but yon floweret wild,
With its bells of azure hue;
I have loved it when a child,
Round my early home it grew!
Childhood's days are gone for ever,
And their radiant sun hath set,—
But the heart will still remember,
'Though remembrance bring regret.



The Wild Hyacinth.

345

Gladsome forms are moving round me,
Music's joyous tones rise high;
I alone, sad thoughts surround me,
And the tears have filled my eye.
Memory's pencil fondly traces
Other scenes and pleasures past,
Cherished forms, and friendly faces,
Joyous days that could not last.

Let others cull the blushing roses,
Favourites of the honey-bee;
The flower that in the woods uncloses,
Is dearer, lovelier far to me!
Oft, amid the woodland bowers
In my gay, unheeding years,
Laughing, I have plucked those flowers—
Now, I bathe their stems with tears!

PARIS, 1847.







A Sister's Heart.

Oh! blessed are the ties that bind us to a sister's heart!
Whate'er may chance, we know her love from us will
ne'er depart;
In after years, our hearts may form friendships that cheer
awhile,
But oh! what friendship's fondest art can match a sister's
smile?

What sad, yet soothing memories doth that sweet smile
recall!
The long, long days of happiness within our father's hall,—
The ancient forest ringing with the shouts of childish
glee,—
The silvery moonbeam falling on the broad and restless
sea,—



The porch, around whose columns white our hands have
helped to twine
The dark and glossy ivy, and the graceful clustering
vine,—
The friends, whose cheerful voices joined in laugh or
song of mirth,
When we gathered in the winter nights, around the
pleasant hearth!

Others may join our festive hours, and talk of pleasures past,
And share our dreams of happiness,—but they shrink
from us at last—
When sickness clouds our fevered brow, when Fortune
turns away,
It is a sister's gentle heart that cheers us on our way!

When sad, desponding, on we toil, amid a life of woe,
To feel her love still clings to us, where'er our tears may
flow—
To find within her sheltering arms a refuge from the blast—
To sit and weep with her for hours o'er loves and joys
long past—



To know she thinks and speaks of us, when we are far away—
To feel her prayer for us is breathed at dawn and close of
day—
It lessens half our burden, when we know she bears a part,
And it adds to all our happiness, to find a sister's heart!



I brought thee Flowers.

I BROUGHT thee flowers when life was young,
And joy was sparkling in thine eye;
Forth from the sunny earth they sprung,
And blossomed 'neath a smiling sky.
Methought it was the fittest gift
To offer in thine hour of glee;
For thy young heart was cloudless yet,
As the sweet flowers I brought to thee.

I brought thee flowers when Hope's rich gleam
Fell o'er thy path, so calm and bright;
When Friendship's smile, and Love's sunbeam,
Had tinged the world with fairy light;
I twined them in thy raven hair,
They were so pure, so bright to see!
Thy future path appeared as fair
As the gay flowers I brought to thee!



I brought thee Flowers.

349

I brought thee flowers when thy cheek
Was pale with watching and with dread,
And thou, with brow resigned and meek,
Didst place them by thy dying bed—
Dimly the rays of Faith were cast
Across the dark and troubled sea—
The bloom of life was fading fast,
Like the pale flowers I brought to thee.

I gathered flowers when all was o'er
And thou wert laid beneath the sod—
Thy heart with pain might throb no more,
Thy spirit had returned to God!
And, as I knelt beside thy tomb,
I cried, "Sweet spirit! thou art free;
Thou'rt blooming by the eternal throne,
Pure as the flowers I brought to thee!"




1848.



Stanzas.

WHENCE comest thou, O stormy Wind, that rushest moan-
ing by,
When the pale stars strive in vain to pierce the dull and
leaden sky?
From what deserted household hearth, hast thou swept
across the foam?
And, oh! what tidings bringest thou from the distant land
of home?

Tell me, if thou hast crossed the spot where my early
years were spent?
Hast thou seen the clustering woodbine, with the damask
roses bent,
The sunny fields, the shady woods, where we loved at
morn to rove,
And the feathery moss a carpet spread within the quiet
grove?



Do the wild birds build their leafy nests around the cottage door?

Are their notes as blithe, as musical, as they used to be of yore?

Or hath the cruel hand of change fallen on all around,
And the old majestic forest trees been levelled with the ground?

Peace be around that lovely home! may every blessing fall

Upon its winding beechen groves, its lindens fresh and tall!

How often, in the summer-time, when birds are singing free,

Scene of my bright and joyous youth! will memory turn to thee!

PARIS, 1847.



On Hearing of the Fate of Sir J. Franklin.

*Five years have passed away, since from our shore
The fearless Mariner sailed forth, once more
To face the dangers of the Polar main;
And prayers went with him, from his native land—
Prayers for the brave and venturesome hearts that manned
The gallant ships which never came again.*

*Not one survived to tell the dreadful tale
Of whelming iceberg, or tempestuous gale,
And ills that sternly racked each drooping frame,
When perils hedged them closer day by day,
Till hope and strength in the hard task gave way,
And white-lipped famine o'er the deep snow came.*

*And worse, far worse, the tortures of the mind,
That aid and comfort vainly strove to find
In the vast desert and inclement sky—
No living form was near,—they heard no sound
Save the hoarse wind that roared and moaned around
When the last sufferer laid him down to die!*

On Hearing of the Fate of Sir J. Franklin. 353

Oh! dwelt their thoughts in that last fearful hour
On sunny dreams of glory and of power—
High hopes that cheered them, when their hearts were
young?
Nay! turned they not to all they held most dear—
The many loved ones, who might never hear
The last fond message of each dying tongue?

The mourner's heart might well be desolate
At the mere thought of that mysterious fate,—
The leaden cloud of terror and despair
Which gathers darkly o'er the distant grave
Of those lone wanderers, the great, the brave,—
Did we not know that God is everywhere!

And surely, all who spend the golden time
Of ardent youth, of man's maturer prime,
And years when hairs are grey and eyes are dim,
By nobler weapons than the sword or lance
The sacred cause of learning to advance,
And serve God's creatures, must be dear to Him!

There is no spot on all the boundless earth,
From the warm Tropics to the frozen North,
Where Britain's fearless children have not trod,—
To bid the Day Star rise on heathen night,
To serve fair Science, and shed fuller light
On all the wondrous paths that lead to God.

354 *On Hearing of the Fate of Sir J. Franklin.*

And, mid the crowds that swell the lists of fame,
O gallant Franklin! may we write thy name,
 And twine the laurel round thy pallid brow—
Honour to thee! and to the true and tried
Companions who have perished by thy side,
 In the cold regions of the Arctic snow!

30th October, 1854.

The White Lily.

AMID the garden's broidered paths thou standest like a
queen,
With a diadem of red, red gold, and robes of silvery
sheen ;
The glossy leaves and velvet flowers in silence round thee
wait,
Like courtiers grave, and high-born dames, to grace thy
regal state.

Emblem of Monarchy thou art, in thy place of pride
alone,
Yet bending ever to the cry of suppliants near thy
throne ;
White as the soul of Chivalry, thy leaves exhale a scent
Like deeds of bounteous charity, with truth and justice
blent.

Ah! who, to see those petals pure as drifts of moonlit
snow,

Would dream they passed o'er battle-fields where the
crimson torrents flow?

What gallant hearts, for love of thee, in loyalty and faith,
Undaunted faced the serried ranks, and braved a fearful
death!

When Vendée sent her bravest sons to battle with their
foes,—

When the cry of hope and liberty in Brittany arose,—
And deeds were wrought by simple men, unskilled in art
of war,

Greater than all the vaunted skill of the Paladins of yore.

Anjou's meek saint—the good Lescure,—Bonchamp, whose
dying breath

Craved pardon for the hordes that filled his land with
shame and death,—

And he, the young heroic chief, the gentle and the brave,
In the morn of life and glory called to fill a martyr's
grave!

Proud names of old nobility, kind deeds of household love,—
The boldness of the eagle, and the mildness of the dove—
All that is loyal, true, and brave, recall those leaves of
thine,

Thou pure and stately emblem of the Bourbon's regal line!

The Legend of the Fairies' Elm.

'Tis morn! 'tis morn! in the glowing sky
The skiffs of the angels go darting by;
And far away, o'er the breezy hill,
The wind bears the sound of the clarion shrill;
On the grassy meadows the lists are set,
With lance and plume are the warriors met,—
Banners are fluttering high in air,
Bright eyes, fair faces, high hearts are there;—
But the Baron sits in his pride apart,
With a gloomy brow and a joyless heart!
Time was, his laughter, a jocund sound,
Sent gladness and joy to all around:
He was sprung of lineage good,
Fearless of carriage and blithe of mood;
But early snows on his brow were shed,
And the mirthful smile from his proud lip fled,

Since, long ago, on a summer's day,
His child by the fairies was stolen away—
His only child, a maiden fair,
With mild blue eyes and sunny hair,
Dancing along, like a sinless sprite,
Through the dreamy shade and the warm sunlight;
Now, pausing to rest the flowers among,
Now, listening to strains by the wild birds sung—
Afar they followed her joyous track,
But she passed through the woods, and she came not
back.

The sun went down amid silence deep,
For the voice of the birdies was hushed in sleep,—
The flowers folded their dewy leaves,
The prayer was said 'neath the cottage eaves,—
But vainly they sought in the meadows green,—
Never on earth was the maiden seen,
And sadness fell, like a funeral shroud,
O'er the desolate halls of that Baron proud!

With joyous music, the martial train
Winds o'er the mount to the sunny plain;
The Knights are met, and they marvel long
Why Sir Reginald is not amid the throng—
Soldier more fearless, more proud than he,
Never rode forth from the North Countrie,—
From the glittering feast and the mimic war
Where tarries the Knight of the Silver Star?

The Legend of the Fairies' Elm. 359

On a grassy knoll, where the tempered light
Gleams on the stems of the birches white;
Where the brooklet murmurs through reeds and sedge,
And the green ferns droop o'er the water's edge,—
Wrapped in a cheerless reverie
He sits in the shade of a tall Elm tree.
Far beneath him the landscape lay,—
The massive walls of the Castle gray,
The waving woods and the fertile plain,
Tower and hamlet, a broad domain!
Once they acknowledged his father's sway,—
Now, from his house they have passed away,
And left him, the last of an ancient race,
With a princely birthright,—no resting place,—
Nought, save a hawk and a gallant steed,
And a stately greyhound of matchless speed—
Nought, save an arm of strength and skill,
A trusty sword, and a dauntless will!

And Sir Reginald spake: "Tis sad, I trow!
When age draws deep furrows across the brow,—
When he, who rode forth with spear and shield,
Lord of the chase and the battle-field,
Must sheathe for ever his faithful brand,
And yield the palm to a younger hand!
Or when the friends of our youth pass by,
With a harsh, cold word, and a careless eye,

360 *The Legend of the Fairies' Elm.*

And those who have mingled in joy or woe
Like brothers, meet but as strangers now—
Or when, shut out from the free, blue skies,
In a narrow dungeon the captive lies,
Hour by hour, and day by day
Watching his best years glide away—
'Tis a bitter grief! but worse, far worse
Is a noble name with an empty purse!"

"Woe is me! ah! woe is me!"
Thus sighed a voice from the old Elm tree,
"Seven weary years in the wood I dwell,
Prisoned here by a fairy spell;
I see my young companions pass
In the gay spring-tide through the odorous grass,
While rises high on the balmy air
The merry laughter I may not share;—
I see my father at times ride by,
With a pallid cheek and a joyless eye,
His face is less cheerful than when he smiled,
Long, long ago, on his darling child,—
He stood last eve on yon sunny spot,
I gazed and sighed, but he heard me not.
Woe is me! ah! woe is me!
Will none break the charm of the old Elm tree?"

The Legend of the Fairies' Elm. 361

The Knight looked up,—no form was there,
But he saw a tress of golden hair,
He saw an arm and a hand of snow
That carelessly drooped o'er the leafy bough;
And lightly he rose on his bended knee—
"Tell me, oh! tell me, thou sweet Ladye!
How may I end the fairies' thrall,
And lead thee safe to thy father's hall?"
The young leaves rustled, and once again
That sweet voice rose in a flute-like strain:
"From the flowery South to the frozen North,
If thou canst find, on the dewy earth,
The gift best loved by the old Elm tree,
The spell will be broken, the captive free!
Yet, take this token,—the gem hath power
To aid and strengthen in danger's hour;
From the spirits that lurk by land and sea,
O gentle Knight! may it set thee free!"
And there lay at his feet, in the crystal dew,
A priceless gem of the sky's own hue.
Sir Reginald rose, with a thoughtful brow,—
"By our Lady and all the saints, I vow,—
By the sacred name of my fathers bold,—
By my knightly faith and my spurs of gold,—
Ay! though my life should the forfeit be,—
From the Haunted Elm I will set thee free!"

"Come hither, come hither, my gallant steed!
Thou hast served me oft in the greatest need,
In the glittering pageant, the tourney bright,
The joyous chase, and the stormy fight—
Now bear me far o'er the green earth's breast,
In search of the gift that the Elm loves best!"
And away, with the lightning's arrowy speed,
Sir Reginald hastes on his gallant steed.

The heavy shade of the dark pine bough
Waves o'er the fearless rider now;
Stern Winter binds with his icy chain
The foaming torrent, the dreary plain;
And the charger's tramp wakes a hollow sound
At every step from the cold, hard ground;—
He hears the howl of the wolves at night,
As they pass to and fro in the dim moonlight,
And the fox and the grisly bear peep forth,
Like gnomes, from the caves of the frozen earth.
At the half-closed door of a chamber vast,
From his panting courser he springs at last.
He enters the vault so narrow and damp,—
By the fitful gleam of a funeral lamp,
He sees a form of giant mould
Clad in a suit of armour old.
'Tis Siward, the haughty Earl, whose name
Once filled the land with its well-earned fame,

The Legend of the Fairies' Elm. 363

The dauntless chief of the Viking throng,
The hero of many a Runic song!
He sitteth there, erect and tall,
As when, in the gloom of his vaulted hall,
He felt the swift approach of death
In his nerveless arm, in his fluttering breath;
He girt the cuirass on his breast,
He donned his helm with its nodding crest,
And waited in pride, though his eyes were dim,
For the only foe that could vanquish him!
Softly Sir Reginald lays his hand
On the hoary warrior's rusty brand,—
The wild wind sweeps through the forest round,
The door falls to with a jarring sound,—
Strange shapes glide round him, and now he hears
The clashing noise of a thousand spears!—
In breathless haste, from his breast he drew
The fairy gem of the sky's own hue,—
The murmuring voices died away,
The spectres left the ruins gray,
The door unclosed, and the healthful air
Fanned his pallid cheek, and raised his hair,
As with throbbing heart the young Knight sped
From the lonely cave of the mighty dead.

364 *The Legend of the Fairies' Elm.*

He hath gained once more the woodland shade,
And the sword on the smooth green turf hath laid,
And the tender wild-flowers cluster o'er
The steel that so often was dyed with gore.
"Sweet spirit, that makest thy dwelling-place
In the dreamy shade of the pleasant chace,
Look from thy leafy throne, and see
The precious gift I have brought to thee!
'Tis the sword of one whose arm of might
Was raised in the valiant defence of right,—
Who passed through the earth like a meteor star,
Shedding light and wonder and fear afar,—
Who left to his Fatherland a name,
Through the lapse of ages still dear to Fame,—
Noble and dauntless, stern and bold
Was Siward, the son of the Vikings old!"
He said, and unbraced his massive helm,—
No answer came from the Haunted Elm,
But the leaves were stirred, and a dewdrop clear
Fell to the ground, like a maiden's tear.

"Come hither! come hither, my falcon good!
Companion thou of my joyous mood;
On the open heath, on the fern-clad hill,
Is none like thee for speed and skill;
Aid me to seek, over moor and lea,
The gift so prized by the old Elm tree!"

The Legend of the Fairies' Elm. 365

The rocks, the rivers, the moors, are passed,
He hath gained the beauteous South at last :
He hears the voice of the murmuring rills,—
He sees the groves and the ancient hills,
All bathed in the purple light of eve ;
Slowly the sun sets, loth to leave
A scene as fair as ever yet
The eye of roving pilgrim met,—
As ever shed a sunny gleam
On raptured poet's noontide dream.
Drowsily, drowsily through the trees
And the dewy grass, sighs the evening breeze.
It bears on its wing through the leafy bowers
The breath of a thousand odorous flowers,—
They hang in bright garlands from boughs, which cross
The wanderer's path,—in the fragrant moss
They cluster around his weary feet,
And raise their eyes of love to greet
The stars that are shining tremulously
In the azure dome of the summer sky.

Why flutters the falcon overhead?
The proud, keen glance from her eye hath fled,—
What sound of power, what vision rare,
Hath checked the Huntress of the air?
A small green bird, of plumage bright,
With eyes of the opal's changeful light,

266 *The Legend of the Elfin Elm.*

Flashed on a waving olive bough,
In the tranquil slumber, a singing now,
So sweet a strain, so light, so clear
Was never heard by mortal ear.—
It lingers like a star in the forest bowers,
It widens o'er the dimming flowers,
And rolls forth many a winking star,
In the same field of the heavens air.
And the Angel said, "The here! The here!
The gift that the fairy holds so dear,—
That song would make a flowered lawn,
And chase the lagging hours of pain,—
Sweetly each window melody
Must break the spell of the old Elfin tree!"

Alas! when he reached the glade once more,
The leafy pomp of the year was o'er,—
The Autumn wind moaned hoarsely round,
And the dead leaves fell with a dreary sound—
Vainly did that sweet bird essay
Again to pour forth his joyous lay;
A glassy film o'er his bright eye spread,
And Death's icy finger bowed his head,—
And the wind, through many a leafless stem,
Hollow and sad, wailed his requiem.

The Legend of the Fairies' Elm. 367

"Come hither! come hither, my fleet greyhound!
Thee by my side have I ever found;
Though others were faithless, thou still wert true,—
Thou didst not fail when the cold wind blew,
And those who loved me when Fortune shone
Left me to breast the dark storm alone;—
In my weary search through the world so wide,
In light or darkness, be thou my guide!"
And away, away, o'er the cold moist ground,
Sir Reginald follows his noble hound.

The glorious main! the glorious main!
It binds the earth with its mighty chain,—
It mirrors the sky on its heaving breast,—
Never in silence, never at rest!
When the winds are high, with an angry roar
It lashes the rocks and the trembling shore,—
In the stillness of night, when the breezes sleep,
It sighs and murmurs, that restless deep—
Symbol of power, of mystery,
What were the beautiful earth without thee?
Like a bird in the joy of the early spring,
Cleaving the air with its rapid wing—
Like a steed set loose in his hour of pride—
O'er the foaming billows the bark doth glide.
The wet oars flash in the warm daylight,
And the tall masts bend 'neath the canvas white;

368 *The Legend of the Fairies' Elm.*

But when the toils of the day are done,
Sir Reginald paceth the deck alone;—
A strain of wondrous melody
Floats like a sigh o'er the placid sea,
And lo! on a rock all rugged and bare
Reclines a form, more than mortal fair,
A maiden, braiding her tresses bright,
And gazing up at the moon's pale light;
Of the countless treasures, the gems that sleep
In untrodden halls of the mighty deep
She sang,—and Sir Reginald's heart was stirred
With the music strange of each mystic word,
And he longed to go down to the depths of the sea,
And learn all its secrets, its mystery!

A plunge, a murmur, the spray flashes high
And shrouds from his gaze the starry sky,—
With a plashing sound and a murmur dread,
The waters close o'er the young Knight's head.
Swiftly he darts through the ocean vast,
And stands on the smooth bright sand at last!
Ah! who shall tell what priceless store
Of gold and gems strew the ocean hoar,—
What wonders unguessed by mortal thought,—
What spoils of earth, by the tempests brought
To deck the palaces fair and free,
Where dwell the daughters of the sea?

The Legend of the Fairies' Elm. 369

Banners of seaweed, tangled and bright,
Pillars of coral red and white,—
Halls, that the shells and the firm sands pave,
Circled and roofed by the crystal wave;—
He gazed on the riches that round him lay,
But time wore on, and he might not stay—
A string of pearls in his hand he took,
Cast on the palace one parting look,
And hastened once more through the heaving brine—
Strange, uncouth shapes form in ghastly line,
And his heart is chilled with a nameless fear
As those grisly, monstrous forms draw near—
His strength deserts him, his cheek is wan,
But he thinks on his fairy talisman;—
It brings him safe through that dread array,
Safe to the blessed light of day!
He gains the vessel—he stands once more
By the rippling waves on the rock-bound shore,
And his faithful greyhound takes his stand
By his master's side, and licks his hand.

Again in the greenwood Sir Reginald treads,
And the Wizard tree o'er his pathway spreads—
"O gentle Fairy! look down, look down
On the tribute I bring to thy sylvan throne!
I come from a strange yet a bright abode,
Where the foot of no mortal as yet hath trod;

I have wrung from the heart of the heaving main
The treasures I asked of the earth in vain,—
The fairest spoils of the crystal sea,
Pale, virgin pearls, do I offer thee;
The price of my toils once more I claim—”
Long, long he paused, but no answer came!

Dejected, weary, and sick at heart,
He sat him down 'neath the oaks apart;
And he said, “Yon seared and blighted tree,
The emblem of my life shall be—
Its spring of promise unfulfilled,—
Its young leaves withered, nipped and chilled,—
Its blossoms, white as driven snow,
Swept sudden from the parent bough,—
Nor Summer's warmth, nor genial rain
Shall bid the trunk revive again!
Those who oft met round my father's board,
Who drew, at his word, their trusty sword,—
Proud, in the shadow of his name
To follow in the paths of Fame,—
Possessed of wealth that can purchase all,
They pass me now in the festive hall,
Like proud birds flaunting in plumage bright,
And they smile in scorn at the penniless Knight.—
Ye forests, beneath whose friendly shade
In the joy of my early years, I strayed—

Ye flowers I cherished, ere Grief had come
To darken the peace of my joyous home,—
Ere I felt the touch of Sorrow, which now
With her burning chain girds my fevered brow—
Oh! had ye wafted your sweet perfume,
In those happy days, o'er my quiet tomb!
Weary and sad is my heart to-day,—
Oh! could I cast from its depths away
The blight of trouble and care which lies
On my childhood's fairest memories,—
All its hopes decayed, all its wasted powers,—
As I cast ye from me, ye gay field flowers!"

And he flung them aside, as, with heavy heart,
From the forest he turned him to depart.
Was it a dream? did sweet minstrelsy
Well from the trunk of the haunted tree?
Yes! at his side the sweet Ladye stands,
Folding in prayer her snowy hands,
With her blue eyes raised, as in thanks to Heaven
For the boon of freedom the Knight hath given!
That which he sought, with toil and pain,
From the earth and the foaming sea, in vain,—
Lay shrined, all the while, in the flowerets sweet
That blossomed around his heedless feet!
Alas! how often, like him, we rove
Far from the shelter of household love,

372 *The Legend of the Fairies' Elm.*

Wasting our efforts, the noblest and best,
All our heart's rich stores, in a fruitless quest,—
While the worth and the beauty we despise
Of the simple pleasure that near us lies—
Happy, thrice happy! if pitying Fate
Dispel the illusion, ere 'tis too late!

There is feasting and joy in the Baron's hall!
When, on the breast of the warrior tall,
Breathing forth blessings, mid smiles and sighs,
Happy, yet tearful, the maiden lies;
Like a spray of woodbine, trailing free
Round the sturdy boughs of some aged tree—
The lamps are lit in the chapel high
Where her proud forefathers in slumber lie,
The good priest moves to the Altar side
Where Sir Reginald stands with his gentle bride;
And their hearts are joined, on that holy day,
With a love that never can know decay—
Like two crystal streams, with a murmuring tone
Blending their silvery tides in one,
Flow through the plain and the forest glade.
Unruffled, unparted by sun or shade,
Till together they enter the mighty sea
That hides from our vision Eternity!

The Spirit of Song.

THERE is a guardian spirit
 To every mortal given,
To nerve and cheer the suffering heart,
 To guide from earth to Heaven;
It speaks in accents musical
 To the wild and restless throng,
And sheds o'er dreary solitudes
 The witchery of Song.

It dwells in storied palaces,—
 In ruins quaint and hoar,
Girt with the stirring memories
 Of mighty deeds of yore,—
It haunts the ancient senate
 Where the patriot's voice rose high,—
The dim and vast Cathedrals
 Where sceptred princes lie;—

The Spirit of Song.

On battle-fields, where, long ago,
The feast of Death was spread,
Where the long grass waves so tranquilly
Above the slumbering dead—
In quiet country churchyards,
Where the graves lie side by side,
And o'er them in the summer eves
The village children glide ;—

In the vast and dingy city,
The wilderness of sin!
With its narrow, crowded alleys
Where the sun looks never in—
On banks where rise the cowslips
Beside the mossy well—
In the convent, in the dungeon,
In the hermit's lonely cell ;—

In classic haunts, where Genius
Has suffered, toiled, and felt,
Where the painter o'er his easel bent,
The gifted poet dwelt,
Where the minstrel tuned his magic harp,
And sang his sweetest lay,
And the prisoned spirit burst at length
Its tenement of clay ;—

The Spirit of Song.

375

In halls of light and revelry,
Where Pleasure never sleeps,—
In squalid rooms, where Poverty
A dreary vigil keeps,—
In cloistered aisles, where holy men
In meditation trod,
And laid their hearts' deep treasures
On the Altar of their God.

Wherever careless Childhood
Lifts a bright inquiring eye,—
Wherever Man with thoughtful brow
His daily work doth ply,—
Where Woman learns, with patient smile
To suffer and endure,—
Where the mourner shrouds within his breast
A grief Time cannot cure;—

In the page of pompous History,
Where noble names are shrined,—
In books, which are the treasure-house
Of some immortal mind,—
In the soft and balmy breathings
Of the gentle summer air,—
In the sighs, the simplest accents,
Of a heart-inspired prayer,—

In the proud, stupendous fabrics
Of imperishable Art,
In strains of martial melody
That thrill the listener's heart,—
In the beaten paths of daily life
That close around us lie,—
On the mountains, on the ocean,
In the blue, unclouded sky.

Yes! in our glorious universe,
While all things that have breath
But tell the oft-repeated tale
Of suffering and death.—
While Hope and Fear and Memory
O'er human hearts have sway,—
That Spirit's gentle influence
Shall never pass away!

The Gallant Earl of Derby.

"Yt never was sene, their Captayne being Stanleie,
That Lancashyre, Cheshyre, and Wales ran aweye."

Bishop Stanley's Metrical History.

1.

REST thee beside me, little one!
My heart is sad to-day,
'Tis filled with thronging memories
Of friends long pass'd away.
I love to hear thy silvery voice
In laughter ringing free,—
'Tis like the rippling of a stream
Beneath the greenwood tree—
I love to meet the sportive glance
Of thy bright, watchful eyes,
'Tis like the bow of promise sent
To cheer our clouded skies!

The Gallant Earl of Derby.

Thy years are passed in peace, my child!
Love watches o'er thy life;
But mine was spent in crowded camps,
On fields of mortal strife—
In vigils dark, in perils dire,
In weariness and pain,—
God grant those dark and evil days
May never dawn again!
And wouldst thou hear a stirring tale,
Of heroes and their deeds,
Of beating drum and clanging spear,
Of proudly prancing steeds?
Then cast away thy toys awhile,
Press closer to my side,
And learn to bless the righteous cause
In which thy kinsmen died!

II.

'Twere long to tell how rights were scorned,
And old laws trampled down,
How rebels lifted impious hands
Against our Monarch's crown;
And men who bore a holy trust,
Renounced all thought of good,
Betrayed the counsels of their Prince,
And filled the land with blood.

The Gallant Earl of Derby.

379

Then, not till then, the sword was drawn,—
Like eagles on the wing
The Cavaliers of England flew
To guard her noble King!
Then was there arming in the land,
The bugle's thrilling call
Aroused the peasant by his hearth,
The peer within his hall!—
Four brethren from my father's house
One summer morn went forth—
Alas! but one returned, to mourn
By that forsaken hearth!
We rode in hope and courage high,
In youth's own reckless mood,
Nor drew the rein, till on the verge
Of Ormskirk heath we stood.

III.

Noble, and hind, and franklin bold
Were met in stern array,
Full twenty thousand English hearts
Were mustered on that day—
E'en while we gazed, a sound was heard,—
Each head was gently bowed,
As ye have seen the nodding oaks
When summer winds are loud—

I call you by your holy Faith,
Your vows of piety,
The prayers ye lisped in early years
Beside your Mother's knee;
The church beneath whose ivied porch
On Sabbath morns ye tread,—
The hope that lifts your thoughts to Heaven,
The graves where rest your dead!
I call you by the sacred ties
Of ancient amity,
The bonds that joined you to my sires,
The love ye bear to me;
Oh! Fathers! Sons! I call you, by
A deeper, mightier spell,—
The homes, beneath whose peaceful roofs
Your wives and children dwell;
If ye would dwell among your flocks
In happiness and peace,—
If ye would see your land at rest,
And bid the tumults cease;—
If ye would have your children grow
Around you pure and free,
Blessing their fathers' lofty deeds—
Oh! rise, and follow me!"
He ceased, and through the listening crowd
A thrilling murmur ran,
And twenty thousand warriors
Rose, like a single man;—

The Gallant Earl of Derby.

381

Yet well in senate and in camp
That young Lord played his part,
Meeting, with fiery eloquence,
The traitor's baleful art;—
And, when our bleeding land was torn
By ills till then unknown,
He rose, a champion of the right,
A pillar of the throne!
His was a glance, a sunny smile,
To gentle lady dear,—
A soul that with each danger rose,
And knew nor guile nor fear;—
His was an eye like eagle's bright,
Nought 'scaped its daring ken,—
A voice that pierced the battle's din,
And swayed the hearts of men!

V.

"I call you, by the mighty links
That bind us to the throne,—
By all the glorious memories
Of ancient triumphs won,—
By thoughts that nerve the patriot's arm,
And make all true hearts cling
In loyalty around the cause
Of our anointed King!

The Gallant Earl of Derby.

I call you by your holy Faith,
 Your vows of piety,
 The prayers ye lisped in early years
 Beside your Mother's knee:
 The church beneath whose ivied porch
 On Sabbath morns ye tread.—
 The hope that lifts your thoughts to Heaven,
 The graves where rest your dead!
 I call you by the sacred ties
 Of ancient amity,
 The bonds that joined you to my sires,
 The love ye bear to me:
 Oh! Fathers! Sons! I call you, by
 A deeper, mightier spell—
 The bones beneath whose peaceful roots
 Your wives and children dwell:
 If ye would dwell among your dears
 In happiness and peace.—
 If ye would see your land at rest,
 And bid the tumult cease:—
 If ye would have your children grow
 Around the pure and free,
 Blessing their fathers' holy dears—
 Oh! men and women true!
 For reason and courage the listening crowd:
 A standing army true,
 And ye shall be the nation's crown
 And ye shall be the nation's pride.

The Gallant Earl of Derby.

383

That sound became a deafening cheer,
From rank to rank it spread—
Who would not follow to the death
Wherever Stanley led?

VI.

Nine weary years of blood and tears,
Of toils and griefs enow,
In victory or dire defeat
We kept that solemn vow.
We saw our pleasant fields laid waste,
Our harvests scattered round,
The homes where first our breath we drew
Were levelled with the ground;
The foe, through merry Lancashire
Swept like a raging flood,
And wrote a traitor's blighted name
In characters of lurid flame,
In rapine and in blood.
Oh! when we met them face to face,
What glorious fields were won!
We swept them from the trampled land
Like clouds before the sun;
For vengeance raised the feeblest arm,
And bared the peasant's sword,—
Ask Wigan's heath, ask Preston's walls,
How fought our gallant Lord!

VII.

Meanwhile, in Lathom's princely halls,
With her children at her side,
Through days of grief and nights of dread
Abode his noble bride.
With serried spears and pennons gay
The rebel army came;
By challenge loud and words of ruth
They sought to shake the steadfast truth
Of that high-hearted dame.
Though mighty were her enemies,
Her warders old and few,
Her post that fearless Lady held
'Gainst the insurgent crew.
Week after week rolled slowly by,
Till hope at last gave way,
And heavy were the tidings brought
To Chester where we lay.
To horse! to horse! o'er moor and hill
We rode in breathless speed,
To save from sorrow worse than death
The Countess in her need.
The siege was raised — the foe dispersed —
For who could e'er withstand
The charge of Rupert's fiery horse,
The stroke of Derby's hand?

We tracked them through the summer woods
To Bolton's guarded wall,
We swore that, ere the morrow's dawn,
That haughty town should fall;
But long and deadly was the strife,
Our swords were deeply dyed,
Ere from those lofty battlements
The Standard waved in pride.
Alas! it waved o'er many a corse,
And many a cloven crest—
There one was taken from our band,
The youngest and the best!
We found him stretched upon the ground
When that dark fight was o'er,—
But holy was his look, and calm
The smile his young lip wore—
Above his fair and open brow
The crimson turf we spread,
And simple prayers were breathed for him,
And bitter tears were shed.
But oh! ere long, in pain and wrong,
When wrapped in dungeon gloom,
I envied him his brief career,
His proud and early doom!

VIII.

It was a sultry summer's eve,
The world was sunk in shade,
And fast athwart the lurid sky
The veering lightnings played.
And there was tumult on the earth—
By that uncertain light,
Two armed bands of mortal foes
Were marshalled to the fight.
A solemn murmur from our ranks
Rose on the fainting air;
A hush passed o'er the restless crowd,
Each warrior's head was meekly bowed,
Each hand was raised in prayer.
At every pause the good priest made,
Broke in a distant cry,
We heard the hymn of the Puritan,
The thunder of the sky.
Charge! charge! the foremost ranks are met,
And Rupert's snowy plume
Flashes, a beacon midst the storm,
A meteor through the gloom!
On! on! the rebel Scots give way,
The fight is nearly done—
One echoing shout, one effort more—
The distant hill is won!

Now thanks be unto Him, whose arm
Hath given us the day!—
But say, what means that sudden wail,
That cry of wild dismay?
Back—back across the field we haste,
That dark and fatal field—
'Tis strewn alike with friend and foe,
The grey-haired sire, the youth laid low
Upon his dinted shield—
True to the last, our warriors
In serried phalanx stand,
Hemmed in, and felled on every side
By Cromwell's iron band;
They fall, as falls the ripened corn
Beneath the reaper's hand!
Then forward sprang our noble chief,
And waved his sword on high,
And loud, above the battle's roar,
We heard his rallying cry!
Thrice on the hated foe we rush,
Thrice are we driven back,—
Despair hath braced the weakest arm,
Death follows in our track.
Again! 'tis vain! the ranks give way,
The fruitless strife is o'er,
And sadly doth Night's sable pall,
The veil of shame and sorrow, fall
On Marston's fatal moor!

IX.

Then darker, deadlier o'er the land
The waves of faction spread,
By impious hands, upon the block
King Charles's blood was shed.
Our noblest too, in pain and woe
Had yielded up their breath;
Some wore the prisoner's heavy chain,
And some, on many a crimson plain
Had met a soldier's death.
And few — ah! few remained of all
Who drew the righteous sword,
When from the hamlets of the north
A fearless yeomanry went forth
To follow Derby's Lord.
And darker grew our leader's brow,
His sunny hair turned grey,
The voice that thrilled each manly heart
Grew sadder day by day.
Yet ever when the foe we met
And heard the trumpets ring,—
Then waved his gleaming falchion high,
Then rose his stirring battle-cry—
“For God, and for the King!”

X.

On Worcester's long-contested plain
The Royal Standard fell;
The sullen cannon booming there,
The cries that shook the startled air,
Rang many a brave man's knell.
Boldly the Earl rode forth that morn
To battle for the throne;
But evening found him midst his foes,
A captive and alone!
They bore him towards the North Countrie,
They watched him night and day;
His blood must quench their vengeful hate,
His life the forfeit pay.
At Bolton, where his fiery train
Had swept in triumph by,
They doomed him to a traitor's death
Upon the scaffold high.
And thought they on his blazoned shield
To cast a felon stain?
A hundred knights of Stanley's name
Had borne those arms in lists of fame,
Had won the herald's loud acclaim,
The bard's impassioned strain—

The Gallant Earl of Derby.

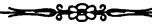
Yet oh! thou great and gallant Earl!
What were their deeds to thine?—
Courage sustained thee in that hour,
Courage and Faith, the lofty dower
Of thine ancestral line!
Though round thee pressed the sullen crowd,
With sword and glittering lance—
They quailed, those canting hypocrites!
At thine undaunted glance.
Louder the cries of vengeance rose—
Alas! not one was there
To shed a pitying tear for thee,
To breathe a Christian's prayer!
One moment's pause—his hands are clasped—
The hero's steadfast eye
Turns upward to the smiling heaven,
The glorious summer sky;
Then fearlessly upon the block
He bowed his stately head—
Flashed from the steel one lightning ray—
It fell—and from its house of clay
That gallant spirit fled!

XL.

And said I none of all who met
 Around his ample board,
Was near him in the last sad hour,
 When fell the headsman's sword?
Oh! there was one, whose faithful heart
 Had shared his triumphs past,
Had followed him through good and ill,
 Nor failed him at the last.
For when the sullen traitors came
 To bear him to his rest,
They found a scroll laid reverently
 Across his manly breast;
Few words were there, a simple strain
 Bespoke the patriot's woe
For the kind heart, the generous hand
 Of him who slept below.
They found it in their hour of pride,
 And they trembled as they read,
For well they knew earth would not hide
 The noble blood they shed.
Oh! never, on the stormy field
 When helms came crashing down,
Hath soldier wrought such glorious deeds,
 Or won such high renown!

And never, till our land is made
A prey to foreign scorn,
Her sons laid low, her strength decayed,
Her ancient glories shorn,—
Till Loyalty becomes a dream,
And Truth an empty word,
Shall British hearts forget the name
Of Derby's gallant Lord!

28th February, 1855.



Sir Richard Lovelace.

'Twas but a dream! the calm and pleasant glade,
Whose turf was sprinkled with the silvery dew,—
The bounding deer—the chequered light that strayed
Through the green leaves of that long avenue,—
Morn caught fresh glory from Hope's lustrous glance,
Eve brought the tuneful song, the graceful dance,—
My joys were many and my sorrows few;—
I wake, alas! in poverty and gloom,
Treading the dreary path whose issue is the tomb!

Bright memories of Youth's unsullied hours!
Life's morning dreams! ah! wherefore haunt me now?
Thickly my path is strewn with faded flowers,
The drops of agony are on my brow—
Disease and want and misery have spread
Their icy cloud o'er my devoted head;
My hopes have chilled, and earthward forced to bow
The thoughts that soared aloft on wings of fire—
My failing hand hath dropped alike the sword and lyre.

A gallant bark, with many a streamer gay
And sail that fluttered to the breeze, was I,
Dancing along, amid the feathery spray,
Breasting the billows when the winds were high,—
Youth, Love, and Glory formed its precious freight,
Hope at the helm, a smiling pilot, sate—
And now—O God! wrecked, shattered, and cast by
To moulder on a bleak, inglorious shore,
Its glittering prow shall cleave the yielding waves no
more!

Around me flows the restless tide of life,
The stormy murmur of the crowd I hear,—
Young, gallant hearts press onward to the strife,
Thirsting for glory, ignorant of fear—
Lips, that Life's bitter cup have never tasted,
Hearts, whose deep wealth the world not yet hath
wasted;
Oh! will they prosper in their high career?
Will Fame's bright garlands crown their lofty brow—
Or will they sink ere long, to be as I am now?

By all deserted and by all forgot!
The menial train, the base and fickle horde
Who fluttered round, when o'er my happy lot
Her dazzling sunbeams changeful Fortune poured,—

The dear, the chosen friends who at my side
 In the red hour of fight were wont to ride,
 Who shared my cup, and feasted at my board
 In close companionship—they pass me by
 With pitying word, cold smile, and half-averted eye.

Thou too, oh! thou, whose radiant beauty shone
 In the gay court, a creature all divine!
 My trembling lute I strung for thee alone,
 And poured my soul's deep worship at thy shrine;—
 And if in court or camp, I toiled to claim
 The bard's rich guerdon and the hero's name,
 'Twas but to win one smile, one look of thine!
 But thou, in sorrow's darkest, heaviest day,
 Like some bright, fickle stream, didst smiling glide
 away!

And art thou happy, when thy children come
 Around thee nestling when the sun hath set?
 Is thy step light within thy stately home?—
 Thy voice as joyous as when first we met?
 Or haply, in thine hours of chastened thought,
 A sad reminiscence hath Memory brought
 Of him who loved thee once—who loves thee yet?
 And dost thou grieve?—Ah no! it cannot be!
 Thou art too proud to waste one passing thought on me!

Oh! had I perished when the booming roar
Of the loud cannon shook the startled land,
When the close-trampled turf was dyed with gore,
And death-clouds hung o'er our devoted band!
I had not seen my King on scaffold slain,
Life's hopes decay,—her sweet illusions wane,—
Nor felt the gripe of Poverty's cold hand—
My name had then been shrined among the brave,
And gentle hearts had mourned o'er my untimely
grave!

Look up, weak heart! In the blue summer skies
Serene and calm, the stars are shining bright
In changeless beauty, those immortal eyes
Gleam from the solemn firmament of Night,—
The wail of human grief they may not hear,—
No tumult reaches their majestic sphere,
Nor dims with earthly clouds their radiant light—
Steadfast and pure like them, the hero's soul,
Fixing its gaze on high, should march towards the
goal.

Sweet Poesy! I woo'd thee in my spring,
When hopes were thick as blossoms on the bough,—
A joyous fairy, borne on rainbow wing,
With eye of light and voice of love, wert thou,—

And I obey—with lowly heart I bow,
 Father and Friend! before Thee in the dust—
My sins I mourn, my frailties I avow,
 In Thy redeeming love alone I trust!
Darkly the lurid clouds around me close—
Yet, though encircled by a thousand foes,
 Hope whispers comfort, for my cause was just!
The fight is done—the soldier sheathes his sword—
The Christian waits in faith the summons of his Lord!



The Forty-Five.

A song of the days gone by,
The glorious days of old,
When brows grew dark and hearts beat high,
As the stirring tale was told!

When from the mighty North
The plaided chiefs came down,
And the Lowlands sent their bravest forth
To fight for Scotland's crown;

And when, at dead of night,
Through Dun-Edin's guarded street,
Came the sudden flash of the torches' light,
And the tramp of many feet;

The Forty-Five.

And the city woke in fear
To the loud and echoing peal
Of the bagpipes, ringing high and clear
The war-notes of Lochiel!

Once more the Stuart stood
In his ancient palace hall,
Where the stately forms of his fathers good
Gleamed on the pictured wall.

With measured pace moved on
A proud and courtly band,
And music rose, and the bright lamps shone
On the noblest of the land;

And gentle dames were there,
And lords of martial port,—
All that was noble, good, and fair,
Came to grace Prince Charlie's court;

Proud was the clansman's eye
As he viewed that loyal train,
For he dreamed that the days of Chivalry
Had dawned on earth again;

With kindling cheek he told
Of Scotland's high renown,
And the royal line of warriors bold
Who wore her ancient crown.

Emblem of faith and truth,
Gleamed the pure rose of snow
O'er the flashing eye of ardent youth,
And the old man's furrowed brow.

Many an eye was red,
And many a prayer arose,
When forth that gallant army sped
To meet the Saxon foes;

Many a daring feat
They wrought on the Southern plain,—
But never more, through Dun-Edin's street
Did the heroes march again!

Some, by field and flood,
And some, on the scaffold high,
Sealed with the price of their hearts' best blood
Their love and loyalty;

And some, on a foreign strand,
In grief and poverty,
Pining in vain for their native land,
Have laid them down to die!

Oh! count it holy ground
Where Scotland's martyrs fell!
Long shall their memory cast around
A deep and holy spell.

By the lone river side,
By mountain pass and glen,
Shall Scottish hearts oft throb with pride
At the name of Charlie's men.

Though the wild dream of fame,
The pomp of feudal sway,
The white cockade, and the Stuart's name,
Have long since died away.

Gone now is Scotland's power,
The clans are severed wide,
And strangers lord it in the tower
That saw the chieftain's pride;

The Forty-Five.

403

No more the claymores gleam,
And the old gathering cry
Sounds like the echo of a dream—
Alas! for the days gone by!



La Foi Bretonne.

It is related that, during the civil war which followed the Revolution of 1793, a Republican officer endeavoured vainly to persuade his prisoner to renounce the faith of his fathers. Finding arguments unavailing, he had recourse to menaces, and threatened to destroy the churches and everything appertaining to the services of religion. But the peasant, looking up to heaven, replied calmly, "Il me restera toujours le soleil et les étoiles!"

They stood together, side by side, at evening's dewy hour,
In the broad and deepening shadow of the aged bellfry
tower:

The sunset tinged the neighbouring hills with its maddening
crimson glow.

And shed a milder radiance o'er the captive and his foe.

All day to sounds of furious strife the echoes wildly rang,
The rallying shout, the rapid charge, the trumpet's sum-
mons clang—

But the hero-bands of Brittany were scattered and over-
thrown.

And sadly on that evil field the lamps of evening shone.

A strange and mournful scene was that—the fields where
 waved the grain
 Were dinted by close-trampling hoofs, and strewn with heaps
 of slain;
 The old man's hoary head laid low,—the youth called ere his
 prime,
 Like a young oak by the tempest felled in the pleasant
 summer time.

All silent and deserted rose the venerated pile,
 No pilgrim at the threshold paused, or trod the shadowy
 aisle;
 Relic, and bead, and breviare around the altar lay,
 The lamp was quenched, the Crucifix uptorn and cast away.

Sad, yet serene, the peasant stood, with eyes upturned to
 heaven;
 Though vainly for a noble cause his hand had fearless striven,
 His God sustained him in that hour of pain and mortal dread,
 And brightly o'er the closing scene, Faith's silvery beam was
 shed.

But darkly frowned the warrior, whose keen, unholy brand
 Had filled with death and foul disgrace the devastated land;
 No generous thought, no soldier's pride, could Victory's self
 impart
 To that downcast and sullen brow, that cold and faithless
 heart.

"Renounce thy God!" the tempter cried; "turn from thy
faith, and live,—

Honours and wealth, nay, life itself, are in my power to give—
Richer than fairy dreams shall be the harvest thou mayst reap.
Why think of life beyond the tomb? Death is an endless sleep!

"Our swords have drunk the tyrants' blood, our arms have
made us free,—

And shall we, at a shaveling's word, still bow the servile knee?
No! man hath no superior, no laws can he obey;
He rules the prostrate world, and owns no creed save Reason's
sway!

"Thou'rt silent, and thy heart still clings to fables long
gone by.

Know'st thou my voice can doom thee now to suffer and to die?
When the rank grass and thistles wave o'er yonder proud
abode—


Its walls hewn down, its priests laid low—where wilt thou
seek thy God?"

Calmly he met the scoffer's gaze; he pointed towards the sky,
And thus, with voice subdued yet firm, the Christian made
reply:

"Ay! thou mayst bid the captive pine beneath the dungeon
bars,—

But canst thou rule the kingly sun, or canst thou quench the
stars?"

Oh, peasant ! versed in mightier truths, in deeper, holier lore
Than ever crowned the life-long quest of boastful sage of
yore ;—
The rich and great ones of the earth, the lords of wealth
and art,
Might envy thee that simple faith, that pure and child-like
heart !



To Hatq.

FROM leafy grove and verdant plain
The young birds pour their cheerful strain,
For Summer's bright and jocund ray
Hath ushered in thy natal day.

Warm as the fertilizing beam
That wakes new life by mount and stream,—
Fresh as the breeze that stirs the tree,—
Is each fond prayer I breathe for thee.

No idle wish my heart would frame
For bliss that Earth may never claim,
For lasting joys and cloudless sky,
And paths where no dark shadows lie.

For thou, as rose the star of youth
Didst early learn the mournful truth,
Thy heart was often sorely tried,
And joy to pain was near allied.

We sat and watched thy changing cheek
Revealing ills thou wouldst not speak,
And many an hour of grief and gloom
We spent within thy darkened room.

Once more, from thy accustomed place
Looks gaily forth thy smiling face,—
Thy thoughtful care once more we prove,
And offices of patient love.

But every dark and bygone fear
Doth thee to us still more endear,
And many are the sweet thoughts, born
In our full hearts, this happy morn ;

As one, whose frail bark long hath striven
With the rough gales of angry heaven,
Returning, greets the well-known shore
With rapture never felt before.

12th June, 1855.

Prayer on the Battle-field.


A SCENE OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR.

MORN on the battle-field! the sunbeams rest,
Like smiles of angels, on the purple heights
Of the far-distant mountains,—on the plain
Where late the golden harvest richly waved,
And the broad, placid stream, which steals away
Through the green pastures, 'neath a shadowy fringe
Of murmuring alders. Now the light hath caught
The summit of the old, time-honoured Church,
Which smiles on hamlets clustering in its shade,
Like a fond grandsire on the sports of youth.
It is a scene of peace.—What mean those cries,
Discordant, rising on the startled air,
As, with proud banner, plume, and bristling steel,
From tent and trampled sod the warriors rise?
Death's angel hovers o'er the fated land,—
The vines are crushed beneath the spoiler's tread,

The village homes deserted, and the fane
Responds no longer to the voice of prayer.
Sharp must the sickle, red the harvest be!
For War's shrill summons echoes through the land.
No more the son reveres the faith which cheers
His father's hoary age,—and they who shared
One couch, and mingling in one joyous game
Lisp'd the same language, meet as foemen now!
Yet, honour to the brave!—to those who clung
In love and fervour to their antique creed,
And “shed their blood like water” for its sake!
And unto ye, the Champions of our Faith,
Who, from your distant lands, went nobly forth
To free the minds of men, proclaiming still
The Word of God should be alone your guide!
A glorious legacy did ye bequeathe
From your cold graves to us!—For this, ye left
Old Norway's sounding shore and woods of pine,—
And Caledonia's rugged, fern-clad hills,—
And the green vales of England—and for this,
Oh! great Gustavus! shall thy name be shrined
'Mid all that earth holds loftiest and most dear.
It was no idle thirst for power and pride
That lured thee from thy northern throne, to share
A soldier's toils and dangers, and to find
In foreign earth a soldier's bloody grave.
Religion's purest beams still sanctify
The wild plain where the Christian hero fell!

Morn on the battle-field! As crowd the flocks,
Obedient to the pastor's summons mild,
So roll the waves of that tumultuous throng
Around one spot,—the grassy mound where stands
The aged Father of their Church, renowned
For eloquence, and zeal, and varied lore.
Lofty his port, and white locks reverently
Shaded his pale and apostolic brow,
Yet fire was in his eye, as he looked forth
On the fierce multitudes, and, with his arm
Outstretched, he pointed towards the distant foe.
Then straightway rose a murmur, and a sound
Of clashing weapons; but the old man paused,
Raising his glance to heaven, as from thence
To draw pure inspiration, and to hold
Commune with saints and spirits of the just,
And martyrs glorified. Serene and clear
Rose the blue dome above the crime-stained earth.
A shadow passed across his lifted brow,
For in his heart awoke a thought of Him
Who came to earth,—who suffered, toiled, and wept,
To save His erring creatures,—and who taught
The sign and essence of His worship—Love!
Yet, in His name the murderous sword was bared,
Crime stalked through shuddering lands, and rapine filled
Thousands of happy homes!—Awhile he strove
With tears for utterance,—then lowly bent
On the green turf, and murmured as he knelt:

“God is above us, brethren! let us pray!”
There went a thrill through that vast multitude;
The coldest heart was seized with sudden awe:
Gently they bowed, as bows the yielding wave
To the swift passage of the imperious wind;
Anon the bugles sounded, and the earth
Shook to the march of squadrons, and a cloud
Of lurid vapour hid the face of heaven.
Proudly they bore themselves that day,—the sons
Of the grim Vikings and the Northmen bold!
Nor was their hand less sure, their heart less firm,
That the dark strife was prefaced by a prayer!



The Poet.

ENVY not the Child of Genius!
Though he leads a life apart,
Monarch of the golden dream-land
Hidden close within his heart.

Ah! too often is the lyre
Tuned to sounds of grief and gloom,—
Round its sweetest accents hover
Shapes and shadows of the tomb.

He is like an exile, destined
For a lovely home to pine,—
Like a pilgrim, toiling ever
Towards a fair and distant shrine.

Soft the voice of inspiration
Steals across the Poet's brain;
Mortal lips may never utter
Half the music of that strain.

Feeble are our words, and heartless—
And too oft the trembling hand
Fails, with warmth and truth, to render
What the daring heart hath planned.

Yet, why murmur? 'Tis the craven
Who succumbs to pain and dole,—
Soaring, soaring, ever upwards
Like an eagle, flies the soul!

All those dim and restless yearnings,
All that thirst for better things,
Are but types of that blest region
Where first spread the spirit's wings.

They, with solemn aspirations,
Bid him lift his weary eyes
Towards the cloudless, bright Elysium
That awaits him in the skies.



The Death of Bonchamps.

FAIR are thy banks, O silver Loire!
And bright thy murmuring stream
Glides by the quiet village homes,
Where mirthful faces gleam,—
By halls where dwelt some mighty line,
And fields where trails the graceful vine.

Yet other scenes thy waves beheld,
Rude steps once trod thy shore,
The grass was trampled 'neath the feet
Of dark, unholy war,—
And, with thy children's life-blood dyed,
Rolled to the sea thy crimson tide.

Within a humble, low-roofed cot,
A dying warrior lay,
A soul of pure and priceless worth
Passing from earth away,—
And friends, by long misfortunes tried,
Stood in mute anguish by his side.

The Death of Bonchamps.

417

Ah me! to see Death's icy veil
Steal o'er the senses fine,—
The pallid lips no longer smile,
The eyes forget to shine,—
The voice that once rose clear and high,
Faint as a slumbering infant's sigh!

Silence and sadness reigned within,—
Loud rose the storm without,—
The fiery speech, the echoing din
Of arms, the vengeful shout,
Childhood's quick sob, and woman's prayer,
And the wild cry of fierce despair.

That sound hath caught the hero's ear
And flushed his pallid cheek,
And the good priest bends low, to hear
His accents faint and weak:—
"Oh! let not Murder's foulest stain
Upon our sacred cause remain!

"True! they unto your lips have pressed
The bitter cup of woe,—
Yet wreak not vengeance swift and dark
On your defenceless foe—
By all the love ye bear to me,
I pray, I charge you, set them free!

The Bank of Bonaparte

I have not sought for bonaparte
 In the land of the new world—
 I have not seen him from Bonaparte's chain,
 To reach the Bonaparte's crown.
 Descending with unshuffled hand,
 At Bonaparte my King, my native land!

My King now dwells in realms above,
 My King is now with ill—
 The God I serve, the God of love,
 Is with me, near me still—
 He, in whose love all nations live,
 Taught me in mercy to forgive!"

That voice prevailed, the chains were riven,
 And from the prison door
 The captives, in the sight of heaven
 Went forth in peace once more,
 And stainless, o'er her leader's grave
 Did Vendée's Lily banner wave.

Years fly with swift, relentless speed;
 The blighting hand of Time
 Effaces many a wondrous deed
 That once was deemed sublime,—
 And some, who filled the highest place,
 Are swept away and leave no trace.



The Death of Bonchamps.

419

But there are names, whose holy sound
In every heart is shrined,—
Words which to earth's remotest bound
An answering echo find,—
And still the peasant tells with pride
How Bonchamps pardoned ere he died.



The Burial of the Crusader.

FROM the tents that rose like the white sea waves
O'er Egypt's storied plain,
The warriors came forth at evening hour,
To the chant of a funeral strain.

They came in their garb of martial pride,
With slow and stately tread,
But a shade of sorrow and silent awe
O'er each haughty brow was spread.

Mid the ruined shrines of a creed unknown,
A lowly grave they made
For the son of an old, chivalric house,
For a Knight of the high Crusade.

The Burial of the Crusader.

421

The sun had set, and the balmy air
Stole across the shifting sand,
As they sang their dirge for the warrior's soul,
In the tones of their native land:—

“Woe to thee, Brother! the young and brave,
The chief of a mighty line,—
Never again shall thy falchion gleam
In aid of the Holy Shrine!

“Thou shouldst have fallen when banners waved,
While thine arm with the foe had striven,
And the wild war-cry, and the clarion's blast
Should have winged thy soul to heaven!

“In the stillness of night the foeman came,
And faint grew thy fluttering breath;
Thine eyelids closed, and thy voice was hushed,
For the conqueror's name was Death!

“There are fond hearts yearning for thy return
To thy father's lordly tower,—
There are young lips breathing sweet prayers for thee
In the twilight's mystic hour.

The Burial of the Crusader.

"Ah! little they dream that thy fair young brow
By the sands of the waste is hid,—
That thou slumberest now in the dusky shade
Of the giant Pyramid.

"No trophy of sculptured stone shall rise
The place of thy rest above;
No maiden shall strew the sod with flowers,
Or shed tears of faithful love.

"The lion shall fly, in the burning noon,
From the Afric huntsman's spear;
And the swarthy tribes of the desert ride
O'er thy grave—but thou wilt not hear.

"Woe for us, Brother! the grief is ours,
The strife and the wild turmoil—
Lonely and sad our pathway lies
Through this weary world of toil.

"We battle with trials on every side,
We mourn for our friends laid low—
Thou art gone to the land where no tempests rage,
Where no tears of sadness flow!

The Burial of the Crusader.

423

“The light that first gladdened our parents’ eyes
In Paradise, bursts on thine,—
From sorrow and pain, through the porch of death,
Thou hast passed to the Holy Shrine!”







Memory.

Oh! say not that Life is a dreary waste,
Where man to toil and suffer is placed,—
An Eolian harp, whose wailing tone
Is ever breathing of sorrow alone!
True! there are griefs which weigh down the heart,
And bid the warm tears from the eyelids start,—
But, if we waste our souls' high powers
In gloomy vigils, the fault is ours!

There's enough of joy on our pathway cast
To cheer the present, to gladden the past,—
Enough of glory and hope is given
To guide the spirit from earth to Heaven;
But we wilfully turn from that blessed light
To the gloom and the hush of a cheerless night;
We love to wander alone, forlorn,—
And we pass by the flower to pluck the thorn!



Who hath not felt, when he turned his gaze
Towards the sweet remembrance of early days—
When, pensively musing, he ponders o'er
Pleasures and scenes which return no more—
That the joys of the shadowy past appear
Like flowers, culled from a brighter sphere,
Wafting sweet perfume that cannot die
Through the long green vistas of Memory?

And the sorrows that bowed his soul to earth,
That drew a dark pall o'er each thought of mirth—
And the tears that fell from the heavy eye
When his heart was weak, and the storm was high—
Arise, like the summer clouds, which flit
O'er the landscape, and cool and soften it,—
Or like stars whose radiant beams are sent
From the dome of Night's glorious firmament!

Lady Seton.

EDWARD THE THIRD, during his wars in Scotland, besieged Berwick, then commanded by Sir Alexander Seton. The garrison, being reduced to great straits by the want of provisions, agreed to capitulate, if, by a certain day, they received no assistance from the Scottish army. Among the hostages delivered to Edward on this occasion was Seton's eldest son, the younger having been taken prisoner a few days before. Edward, in defiance of the treaty he had just concluded, demanded the immediate surrender of the town, threatening, on Seton's refusal, to hang his two sons before his eyes. While the father was yet hesitating what answer to return to this inhuman proposal, Lady Seton appeared on the ramparts, and exhorted him to remember the duty he owed to his King and country. Her voice prevailed, and Seton saved his honour, though Edward carried his threat into execution, and ordered his sons to be murdered in sight of the town. Howitt, in his "Visits to Remarkable Places," relates this incident, and observes that "the glorious devotion of that exalted wife and mother stands forth unsurpassed by that of any other of her sex in the history of the world."

THE haughty Lord of Seton
 Stood on Berwick's ramparts high;
There was gloom upon his forehead,
 There was sadness in his eye;
For the ancient Border city
 Was encircled by her foes,
And his youthful sons were captives
 Where the tents of England rose.

Then out spake England's despot King:
 "The foe hath left the field,
 Why waste thy days in bootless strife?
 I summon thee to yield!
 Unbar the gates to me, Sir Knight!
 Or, ere the moon shall rise,
 Thy sons, the hope of Seton's line,
 Shall die before thine eyes!"

The father looked up to the sky,—
 Between him and the heaven
 Waved the ancient Scottish banner
 That unto his trust was given,—
 Then on his noble boys below
 He bent a mournful look,
 And a storm of wild and bitter thoughts
 That iron spirit shook.

He turned him to the warriors
 Who round him took their stand,—
 They were Earls and haughty Barons,
 All the noblest of the land,—
 They were lords of many a battle-field,—
 But their fearless eyes were dim,
 For the father's heart was sorely tried,
 And they dared not counsel him.

Along the crowded battlements
A sudden whisper came,
As from the turret postern passed
Brave Seton's noble dame.
With a quick, uncertain step she moved
Through all that dark array,
And the roughest warder turned aside
To brush a tear away.

She stood beside the warrior,
And her hand on his she laid:
"From the challenge of a deadly foe
Why shrinks my lord?" she said;
"Must a woman's voice make answer,
And call Lord Seton back
From a world of useless mourning
To stern duty's iron track?"

"Thy sword is Scotland's rampart,
Thine honour, Scotland's stay,
And the eyes of all our countrymen
Are fixed on thee this day:
In this proud and gallant enterprise
Be a father's hopes forgot!
It is their Mother pleads with thee;
Thinkst thou I love them not?"

"'Twas I that nursed them at my breast,
 And, in the midnight deep,
 With a full and loving heart I hung
 Above their cradled sleep.
 I fondly thought my cheek should glow,
 My eyes through tears should shine,
 When my sons upheld the prowess
 Of their great ancestral line.

"I thought that I, perchance, might rear
 Their offspring on my knee,
 And soothe them with the auld-world tales
 My grandsire told to me;—
 Their names were ever in my prayer—
 But now—the dream is o'er,—
 Oh! woe is me, my children!
 Shall I never see you more?

"Ye should have cheered our latter years
 With love, and hope, and pride,—
 Ye should have trod the paths of Fame
 By your gallant father's side.
 Death is welcome to the weary breast,
 When our hoary hairs are few,—
 But ye, my young, my beautiful!
 What had Death to do with you?

"Away, weak thoughts! this is no time
 To falter in the strife—
 Oh! by the noble memories
 Of thine unblemished life,—
 For the sake of thy great ancestors
 Who live in poets' song,—
 For the sake of thy poor countrymen,—
 I charge thee now, be strong!

"Back, back unto the English camp,
 Base minion of our foe!
 Tell him, he ne'er shall reap disgrace
 From Seton's hour of woe.
 To a traitor's foul and fearful death
 He dooms our sons in vain:
 'Tis not on Seton's banner line
 That falls that heavy stain.

"Their names, their lives, in distant years
 Shall commemorate his spot.
 When his dark ranks are swept away,
 And his great deeds are—
 And when, in nature's furthest hour,
 No flower answers his prayer,
 The throes of his murdered sons
 Shall rise against him there."

She led the stricken chieftain
 From the ramparts wide and high,
 That he might not hear the dread command,
 Nor see his children die;
 And, when a groan of fear and pain
 Rose on the startled air,
 With words of love and loftiest thought
 She soothed his wild despair.

But Seton's step was slower,
 And his hair was streaked with white,
 And feeble grew the fearless arm
 That erst had stemmed the fight;
 And never more, in brodered robes,
 With proud and stately mien,
 Amidst the gay and glittering court,
 Was that bright lady seen.

Oh! not till in the holy place
 Where Seton's chieftains lie,
 With their sculptured marble effigies,
 And their martial panoply,—
 Led by the friendly hand of Death
 That brings all woes relief,—
 Could aught recall the mother's smile,
 Or soothe Lord Seton's grief.

23rd July, 1855.

Sonnets.

I.

MIGHTY and various are the cords that bind
Us to our fellow race in every zone,
For man was never made to live alone
In stern seclusion, far from all his kind.
The viewless links of Thought are intertwined
Round all who speak and move—all hearts within
Whose depths one feeling lurks, are near akin,
By might of sympathy and kindness joined—
And we have friends, dear friends, though never yet
Our words have mingled, or our eyes have met
In social commune—holier ties are there
Uniting those who share one loved abode,
Speak the same language, breathe the self-same
prayer,
And walk together to the House of God.

II.

As one who, from the mountain's rugged height,
Looks o'er the plains he traversed late, nor heeds,
In the fair landscape opening on his sight,
The windings of the path that upward leads—
So I, with calm and steadfast gaze, survey,
In peaceful haven moored, the stormy past,
Recall each kindly voice that cheered my way,
Each threat'ning cloud that o'er my path was cast;
Sad retrospect! Sorrow and burning tears
Darkened the prospect of my early years,
And with untimely griefs is Memory stored—
My heart is sad—yet oh! I murmur not,
If all the trials of my chequered lot
Have brought me nearer to Thy fold, O Lord!

30th August, 1854.

III.

THE several creeds of earth in this agree—
One Saviour died for us, and rose to Heaven;
This bond of faith and unity once given,
What matter if some minor difference be?
One loves the incense cloud, the pompous sound
Of the rich Latin 'neath a painted dome,—
Another worships in a hush profound,
Or the sweet accents of his early home.
So have I seen rills from one fountain poured,
Diverging through dark grove or sunny plain,
Mingle their waters in one parent main—
So, where God's Word is preached, His name adored,
Soon as the seventh morn returns again,
All Christian voices blend in one rich choral strain.

IV.

A GLORIOUS task is theirs, the sons of Song!
Mingling their numbers in a stream sublime
Of loftiest melody, that flows along
From the dark ages of remotest Time.
They are the roving birds, from clime to clime
Hasting, with restless, yet harmonious speed,—
The wind, that bears the long-imprisoned seed
To light and sunshine from its bed of slime,—
The stately ships, with sails of snowy sheen,
Freighted with wealth for many a distant land;—
And, like the Angels by the Patriarch seen,
Ascending and descending hand in hand,
Their gifted hearts, their tuneful lips are given
To frame the golden links that bind our earth to Heaven.

V.

(FROM UHLAND.)

VAINLY amid Thy works Thy Hand we trace,—
Our loftiest thoughts may not aspire to Thee;
Yet, from Thy veil of awful majesty,
Once didst Thou come, to bless Thy chosen race.
Happy were they who saw Thy living face,
Heard from Thy lips the words of healing poured,—
Thrice happy he, who, at Thy sacred board,
Upon Thy bosom found a resting-place!
What marvel then if, o'er the desert sand,
Rode serried armies, cased in glittering steel;
And pilgrims wandered from their native land,
Beside Thy tomb to bend, O Son of God!
In lowliest adoration; and to kneel,
Kissing the favoured earth Thy sacred feet have trod!

VI.

To do our duty! It is hard indeed,
When with temptations is our pathway rife,
And sin keeps guard within us. In the strife
Too often doth the spirit inly bleed.
Where is the man, how good soe'er he be,
Who yields full homage to the Law Divine,
Nor feels at times his rebel heart repine
With murmurs, born of frail humanity?
Yet onward! onward! though the path be steep,
The burden heavy, — for the eye of Faith
Beholds the love which takes the sting from death;
And He who slumbers not, will ever keep
Watch o'er the faithful few who strive to wear
His arms, the banner of His Cross to bear!

29th April, 1855.

VII.

WHEN thou beholdest flowers nursed with care
In the dark windows of a squalid room,
Pale, colourless, and blighted in the gloom
Of streets that never feel the blessed air ;
Or when thou hearest through the iron bars
The captive songster pour his thrilling lay,
Telling of sunny glades and meadows gay,
Of noon's bright sunshine and night's holy stars ;
Though Poverty be there, and all the train
Of crushing want, and sin, and restless sorrow,
Of hearts that loathe the day, and dread the morrow
That brings but fresh increase of toil and pain,—
Ay! though the walls be desolate and bare,
One pure, redeeming thought be sure is harboured
there!

VIII.

TO THE REV. DERWENT COLERIDGE.

AROUND thy name the light of genius shone,
And bright-eyed Fame upon thy youth did wait,
But thou the treasures of thy heart upon
The altar of thy God didst consecrate,—
Didst meekly choose the better part, and take
The burden of the Cross, and so go forth
To battle and to labour, for the sake
Of Him who suffered on our guilty earth.
Thine eloquent words my roving thoughts restrain,
Guiding them gently towards the narrow way;—
'Tis like the music of a cadenced strain,
That makes us sorrow when it dies away;
Yet calmer seems my heart, when thou hast shed
The sacred benediction o'er my head.

IX.

I LOVE to journey through the silent street,
And the green lanes, on early Sabbath morn—
To see the poor, by ceaseless labour worn,
Come forth, the blessed light of day to greet—
For holy must the sunshine be, and strange,
To those whose eyes by daily cares are bound,
Plodding, with burdened hearts, the dreary round
Of toil that knows no respite and no change.
It is, methinks, a preparation meet
For those who, kneeling at the holy shrine,
With reverence hear proclaimed the words divine
That promise balm and rest to weary feet—
Oh! the glad stillness of the Sabbath morn
Is beautiful, beyond all dreams of fancy born!

X.

I AM not one of those who deem that death
Was in the world ere our first parents fell,—
That the grim spectre in the fragrant dell
Nipped the young blossoms with his icy breath.
Had Eve been happy in her sinless home,
If the sweet bird that through the dreamy hours
Poured his gay carol o'er the opening flowers,—
The graceful fawn that by her loved to roam,—
The lustrous insects that, with wings outspread,
Darted from bough to bough, from leaf to leaf,—
Mute, motionless, to song and sunshine deaf,
On the green carpet of her bower lay dead?
Ah no! unknown to Eden's fair domain
Was the hot tear of grief, the wail of anguished pain.

XI.

AN oasis in the parched desert's heart,
A silvery fountain in an arid plain,—
Mid crowded streets such is the lowly fane
By worship sanctified and set apart.
Dimly the light steals through the coloured pane
On the calm features of the white-robed priest,
On thoughtful brows from weekly cares released,
And fair young faces wearing yet no stain—
Without, the leaves are bursting on the lime,
The gaudy butterfly and murmuring bee,—
All sights of beauty, sounds of vernal glee,
With love and gladness hail the sweet spring time,—
Within, the solemn gloom, the hush of prayer,
Shed holiness and awe upon the very air.

May, 1855.

XII.

TO MY MOTHER.

THIS is thy natal day, — and many a prayer
And fervent wish we breathe to Heaven for thee, —
We who, alike, thine hours of social glee,
And chastened thought, were ever wont to share.
Sorrow hath darkened many a bygone year,
And gladly would thy children's hand essay
To wipe from thy dear cheek the frequent tear,
And drive all melancholy thoughts away.
Blessings be on thee in the years to come!
May sweet Affection light thy peaceful home,
And Friendship's tendrils closely round thee twine;
And may thy griefs but prove like fostering dew,
That bids the flower revive and bloom anew
In the full spring of happiness divine!

8th March, 1855.

XIII.

TO MARY.

YES! we are friends! and not in words alone
Of empty sound — united by the ties
Of changeless love, the gentle memories
Of pleasant days, bright hours for ever flown!
There is no music sweeter than the tone,
The thrilling tone of some beloved voice,—
The hand's warm pressure makes the heart rejoice
At thought of all the love we call our own.
Time speeds remorseless on his swift career—
I am content to see the years depart,
If they but leave me all I hold most dear,
All that a sweetness can to life impart,—
The glance of loving eyes, the words sincere
Of early friends — the kindred of the heart!

16th April 1855.

XIV.

WHAT is the virtue God most loves to see?
Not Faith that soars on strong, untiring wings,
Hope that irradiates all earthly things,
Or Science grappling with all mystery!—
’Tis Charity, the pure and patient love
That dreads no evil, has no thought of guile,
And calms the storm of passion with a smile
Reflecting light and beauty from above.
She giveth sympathy to them that mourn,
Alms to the needy, to the weary rest,—
And hateth nought, save guilt, that in each breast
Uproots the seed, to plant the venom’d thorn;
This she laments, with penitential tears
Washing the sin-stained record of our years.

XV.

TO MY MOTHER.

AGAIN sweet prayers ascend to Heaven for thee,
Mother and Friend belov'd; whose dear name
A fount of tenderest gratitude will claim
While Thought retains her viewless empyr.
What owe I not to thine untiring care!
Life and the joys that make life dear to me;
The blessed ties of social amity,
And the sweet accents of our household prayer.
I look back on the past, with frequent sighs,
For oft my wayward heart hath gone astray;
Yet, though it never can thy love repay,
A soothing thought within my soul doth rise
To bless the fate, that, through this world so wide,
O best and earliest friend! still leaves me at thy side!

8th March, 1856.

XVI.

TO ISABEL

I stood one night with thee, my gentle friend!
Watching the distant lamps that flickering shone
In the gay city's heart; the autumn moon
Rose high in heaven the whilst we two did blend
Our souls in love that never shall grow less.
Long years are passed, and we are severed now,
And the calm beauty of thy placid brow
Too seldom doth my yearning vision bless;
Yet doth the thought of that one night endure
In my heart's inmost depths,—for I was ever
Like those dim earthly lamps that flash and quiver
With light awhile, then sink in gloom profound;
Thou art the moonbeam, calm, serene, and pure,
With thine own lustre brightening all around!

XVII.

"I COULD do much for God, were my lot cast
In a more dark, more perilous time than this ;
To give up all for Him were surely bliss,
And daunt the hosts of evil gathering fast!
Why are the days of sainted martyrs past?
May we not grapple with the life that is,—
Shape out a nobler course, nor choose amiss
In our deep thirst for things remote and vast?"
Bethink thee, dreamer! Pilgrimage afar,
Heart-wasting penance, God not oft demands;
Duties lie near us, wheresoe'er we go;—
Where swept of old the thunder blast of war,
On the lone rock the embattled fortress stands,
The harvest ripens in green vales below.

XVIII.

(FROM DANTE.)

WHEN night o'ershadows earth with dusky wing,
And daylight from the waning skies doth fade,
On sea and land, in tree and bosky glade,
And 'neath the roof-tree, rests each living thing.
Sleep to the winds all vexing thought doth fling,
The weary limbs on welcome couch are laid,
Till the fair tresses of the Eastern maid
Herald anew man's daily travailing;
But I, the sad one, from the crowd apart,
Haunted by sighs that cease not night or day,
With eyes unclosed, and heart awake to pain—
Like some poor bird snared by the fowler's art,
I strive for freedom, but each vain essay
Closer around me winds Grief's subtle chain.

XX.

Love, Hope, and Beauty—are they not all flowers
Implanted in the garden of our heart?
Some few we tend with care, and set apart
To crown our foreheads in great festal hours;
And some we crush beneath the pitiless showers
Of footsteps rushing to an unknown mart;
And some we gather, then, with fickle start,
Fling back to die in their despoiled bowers;
And some we use to mark a chosen verse
In the clasped Bible of our inner life,
When their oft-studied part our souls rehearse
Of fear and grief and sorrow ever rife;
And some we lay, tear-blinded, on the hearse,
Crowning the victor who hath done with strife.

XXI.



Alas! who shall say that dreams are but the light
And fleeting shadows of a torpid brain?
The soul is sleepless, during slumber's reign
She wanders forth on her erratic flight;
At times she brings strange recollections thence,
Fantastic shapes that fright us and perplex,
Or a dim consciousness which doth but vex
With its uncertainty our waking sense;
Till scenes where we have never trod before,
The shadows of some distant home appear;
And voices, like an echo, strike our ear,
Of something we have heard and loved of yore.
'Tis a strange mystery, this phantom chain
Wherewith our life is bound,—but Death will make
it plain.



A Prayer.

“RESTORE my sight,” the blind man cried; and, at the
Saviour’s word,
The light dawned on his darkened orbs, and vision was
restored;
He saw again the laughing sky, the earth on which he
trod,—
Weeping, he fell at Jesus’ feet, and owned the Son of
God!

Lord! I believe! but doubt hath oft my troubled heart
assailed,
Till every joy hath sunk in night, and sorrow hath
prevailed;
And heavy clouds have veiled the sky, and scarce mine
eye can see
The blessed star of faith and hope that guides us unto
Thee.



O Thou, who to the raging sea didst speak, and say,
"Be still!"

And the wind sank into a calm at Thine almighty will,
Speak peace unto my troubled heart—peace Thou alone
canst give—

And at Thy word the storm shall cease, and sinking faith
revive!

Thou that didst loose the blind man's eyes, and give him
back his sight,

Oh! hear me when I call on Thee, give me that blessed
light!

Teach me to choose the better part, to tread the narrow
road

That leadeth from this weary world to Thy divine abode!

PARIS, July, 1849.





To a Wild Geranium.

(GATHERED IN THE LOWER WALK AT HOLLY HILL. 1851.)

It grew upon a mossy bank,
In the old woodland shade,
Where oft, in Childhood's happy hours,
My careless footsteps strayed.

But Time rolled on, and many a change
With each long year had come,—
I stood, a stranger, in the fields
Around my early home;

I gazed on each familiar scene,
'Twas desolate though fair;
The tall grass waved on every side,
The spoiler's hand was there.



To a Wild Geranium.

In vain I sought my favourite path
Through the calm forest glade,
For levelled were the graceful trees
Around whose stems we played.

'Twas there I found thee, simple flower !
On that lone, desert place
Smiling, in quiet loveliness,
Like some kind, friendly face.

I bore thee from thy silent haunt,
Enshrined henceforth to be
Mid broken twigs and withered leaves,—
All precious things to me!

Memorials of a roving life,
Each relic doth recall
Some gentle thought, some distant scene,—
But thou hast more than all!

Thou speakest of the fresh green lanes,
The blackbird's mellow song,
And all the sweet, poetic thoughts
That to the woods belong.

To a Wild Geranium.

457

Oh! for the sunny hours we spent
Under the hazel tree,—
The wild flowers and the pigeons then
Were all the world to me!

Oh! for the merry games we played
Beside the blazing hearth!
Oh! for the friends, who never more
Will meet in social mirth!

One rests within a lowly grave
O'er India's distant sea,
And cold is now the loving heart
That never changed to me!

Others, whose youth was passed with mine,
I meet but seldom now;
Life's cares have tamed their boyish glee
And sobered every brow;

And other homes, and other ties,
Their warm affection claim;
Yet oh! dear friends, 'tis joy to think
Your hearts are still the same!

To a Wild Geranium.

For me ye have a welcome still,
For me your eyes still shine;
Old playmates! may your path in life
Be brighter far than mine!

For cold and gloomy is my day,
And dark the thick clouds lower,
And my dearest hope is withered now
Like thee, poor faded flower!

Yet rest within the book of prayer,
Sweet relic of my home;
And when across my wayward heart
These dark forebodings come,

Point to the page that bids me check
Each murmur vain and wild,
Trusting in Him whose tender care
Will not forsake His child!

BALNAGUTIE, 28th September, 1853.

On Receiving the First Copy of the
"Legends of the Dunbars."

As one who, from his peaceful native shore
Tempted in quest of wealth or fame to roam,
Trembles when first he hears the angry roar
Of the vexed waves that part him from his home,
And often turns to scan with tearful eye
The well-remembered scenes of happiest Infancy—

So I, embarking on a rougher main,
Tossed by conflicting hopes and sinking fears,
Half glad, half sorrowful, recall again
The dewy freshness of my early years,
And fain would linger on the pleasant shore,
Whose safe and fragrant paths my feet may tread no more.

True! friendly wishes swell my fluttering sails,
Kind looks are beaming on my venturous bark,—
But may not sudden storms and blustering gales
Drive the frail vessel o'er the waters dark?
And storms may rise, and critics harsh gainsay
The meed of kindly praise to my adventurous lay!

Well may I tremble, when I call to mind
The countless sorrows of the bards of old,—
Unknown, unhonoured, midst the crowd they pined,
And bartered priceless thoughts for sordid gold—
Too oft is genius but a fatal dart
That blights domestic joys, and breaks the poet's heart !

Yet, if our brightest dreams the dull mistake,
If with a pitying smile the vain pass by,
Is it not well to suffer for the sake,
Toil for the interests of Humanity,
And feel each gem, from Thought's rich casket torn,
Brings joy, and hope, and light to thousands yet unborn ?

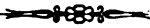
And when, obedient to the voice that speaks,
A fiery impulse in my trembling heart,
All timid, earthly thoughts my soul forsakes
For the rapt fervour of the poet's art,—
'Tis not that vainly, weakly I would claim
The praise of partial friends, the wreath of passing Fame.

No ! higher, loftier aims my spirit move—
To guard from worldly taint the soul's pure flame ;
To rise, all shrinking fear, all doubt, above,—
The great Creator's mercies to proclaim ;
And, in the service of approving Heaven,
Fulfil the glorious task His bounteous Hand hath given !

the "Legends of the Dunbars." 461

Then, though my path be strewn with many a thorn,—
Though fruitless toil and baffled hope be mine,—
And all the woes of our frail nature born,—
To Thee, to Thee my future I resign!
Oh! sanctify the choice my heart hath made,
And be the first-fruits, Lord, upon Thine altar laid!



31st August, 1854.





Elgin Cathedral.

HERE let us pause, and, mid the fallen shafts
And quaintly-moulded corbels, fretted stone,
And crumbling arch, and scutcheon half-effaced,
Call back a vision of the gorgeous past,
When black-stoled priests, with reverent pace and slow,
Trode through the sacred precincts,—when the air,
Heavy with clouds of incense, bore on high
The softly-modulated chant,—and light
Streamed through the richly-tinted glass, and caught
The upturned face of the rapt worshipper.
’Tis silence now; luxuriant weeds have grown
O’er the untrodden pavement; roofless stands
The shattered fane, by miscreant hands laid low,
And left defenceless to the stroke of Time
And the wild, raging elements. Yet Time
Hath kept it holy, and around it cast
Such tenderness and beauty, that the heart
O’erflows with silent and religious awe.



Tread lightly! for beneath thy feet repose
 The silent dead, the lords of olden time!
 High names once graced the funeral stone, where now
 The stranger vainly would some record seek
 Of mitred priests, at whose all-powerful word
 Whole armies shrank abashed;—of fearless knights
 Whose pennon flaunted on the martial plain—
 They lived, and they were famous,—high renown
 Smiled on their deeds, and blazoned forth their praise;
 They built them lofty towers, and fondly deemed
 Their children, to long distant years, should tell
 The story of their prowess and their pride.
 They died, and are forgotten! Silence dwells,
 And Desolation, in the castled halls
 Which know their name no more,—and strangers come,
 With careless footstep, through the long damp grass,
 To gaze upon their tombs, then turn away,
 And reck not of the valour and the grief,
 The dove-eyed meekness, or the wondrous lore
 Hid in the deep sepulchral vaults below!

Oh! what a stern rebuke to human pride
 Speaks from each shattered column, in its wild
 And desolate grandeur! how the raindrops fall
 On the lone cloisters and the lengthening aisle,
 Once filled with thousand worshippers! and see,
 Where the dark ivy in her wild fresh beauty,

Hangs round the mouldering wall, and closer twines
Her arms, as the rough wind sweeps sudden past,—
Like some fair frightened child, who sobbing clings
To the scarred bosom of a tottering sire.
Yes, type of Age art thou!—alone he stands
Amid the graves where his companions lie,—
No friend is near, no kind, familiar hand
To shield him from the fierce and pitiless blast;—
The joys that erst his flowery path adorned,
The aspirations of his riper years,
Buried and mantled by oblivion now,
Show forth as spectres in the murky gloom
Which settles darkly round him.

Lo! the sun,
The glorious sun bursts forth! a slender ray
First gilds the leaden clouds,—anon they part,
And the blue, smiling sky appears beyond!
Oh! be it thus with me, should Heaven appoint
To me a solitary age, that mourns
O'er its long-buried treasures,—may a gleam
Of Hope and Faith above the spectral past
A radiance throw, and, brightening, speak of Heaven!

SEA PARK, 1st September, 1855.

Carl Randolph.

I.

THE sun is up, upon the bough
The birds sing merrily,
And gaily on the green hill-side
The lambs are bounding free.
There's gladness on the earth below,
There's gladness in the sky,
And the tall trees murmur pleasant tales
As the breezes pass them by ;
And, slanting through the peaceful gloom
Of the branches twined across,
The sunbeams kiss the bright-eyed flowers,
In their beds of freshest moss.
Encircled by his noblest peers,—
No courtly, silken ring,—
Beneath an aged, spreading oak
Sits Albyn's warrior King.
His palace is the gay green wood,
The sloping turf his throne,

His sceptre is his good broadsword,
And the plumed casque his crown.
But joyous is his glance, his brow
Is fearless and serene,
As he turns him to that armed throng,
So wild in garb and mien.
Gaze on! gaze on! those mighty hands,
Those fearless hearts, are thine,—
The lords of many a feudal tower
And many an ancient line!
The Bruces twain, those brethren bold,
The dauntless and the gay;
Sir James of Douglas first in fight,
Seton, and Bothwell's gallant Knight,
And Gilbert de la Haye,—
Barons whose falchions glitter bright
In every desperate fray!

Who kneels at good King Robert's feet?
By his high look, I ween
Not often in such humble guise
Hath that young lord been seen!
Ah! by those locks of sunny hair,
That deep, melodious tone,
By the frank eye, majestic brow,
And lip of fire, ye well might know
Young Randolph of Strathdon!

Too long mid England's chivalry
 Hath Randolph made his stand,
 And pressed full oft in friendly clasp
 The Saxon stranger's hand ;
 In mirth and song and revelry,
 In games and tourneys bright,
 Have English maidens watched the plume
 Of Scotland's youthful Knight.
 But yesternorn a captive led
 To the sylvan haunts where dwell
 The bravest chiefs of Scottish blood,
 Who ne'er in England's armies stood,—
 At Edward's footstool fell,—
 When sank the dew on earth's warm breast,
 And the glowing sun had set,
 Alone, in that calm solitude,
 With haughty glance, in serious mood,
 The warrior kinsmen met.
 Boots not to tell how Bruce essayed
 His royal cause to plead,
 Chiding the hand that failed to draw
 The sword for Liberty and Law,
 In Scotland's hour of need;—
 How, touching many a tender chord,
 Whose gentle echo came
 Like music to the warrior's breast,
 He breathed his mother's name.

Enough, the dear light ray by ray.
 The Randolphs' spirit pass'd,
 And hearts that long had severed been
 Together drew it fast.
 Therefore amid his listening peers
 Young Randolph kneeleth now.
 And hope and pride and gladness sit
 On good King Robert's brow.
 No time or could victory
 And power to him impart.
 While ever from his side he missed
 That generous kinsman's heart!

And Randolph spake: "Too long, my liege!
 I dwell among thy foes.
 While on the mountains of my sires
 The cry of battle rose:
 Yet if my youth were light and vain,
 And rash the headstrong will,
 And gay and pompous court,
 My heart was Scotland's still;—
 That heart which danger could not move,
 Thy thrilling tones have won,—
 Lo! at thy feet once more I kneel,
 Receive thy sister's son!
 The dream of heedless youth is past,
 The wild illusion o'er;

The veil drops from my darkened eyes,—
 Oh! had it fallen before,
 Then Randolph had not stained with shame
 The name his fathers bore!
 My King! no kinsman's rank I claim,
 I ask no pardon now,
 Till I my youth's dark sin efface,
 And aid, with loyal hand, to place
 The circlet on thy brow!
 Mid toil and danger and alarms
 Henceforth my path shall be,
 Till glorious deeds my search reward,
 Deeds such as wrought on Scottish sward
 The Knight of Ellerslie!
 To thee my knightly faith I pledge,
 Mine errors I avow;
 May blight and ruin, sin and shame
 For ever darken Randolph's name,
 If I forsake thee now!"
 And Ireland and Bannockburn
 Bore witness to that vow!

II.

“The Leopard banner waves above
Dun-Edin’s rocky keep,
And, rusting in its scabbard still,
Doth Scotland’s claymore sleep?
Douglas hath wrested from the foe
His father’s citadel,—
Of that dark chief, by hearth or hall,
Long as Tradition liveth, shall
Our country’s annals tell—
Will none redeem the Maiden Tower
From undeserved disgrace,
The weapon bare, and nobly dare
To win the honoured place,
Where Kenneth led his savage hordes,
Where noble Malcolm dwelt,
And the queenly saint before the Cross
In prayer for Scotland knelt?
Oh! had I but the eagle’s wing,
Or foot of chamois fleet,
The morrow’s blushing dawn should see
The foe at Randolph’s feet!”
Then up and spake a soldier brave,
A lowly squire was he,—

"There winds a path amid the rocks
 Is only known to me.
 Full often, in the dark midnight,
 From yonder walls of pride
 I stole, unmarked by all the train
 Of guards and seneschal, to gain
 The lowly cot on yonder plain,
 Where dwelt my fair-haired bride.
 The way is steep, the way is long,
 The rocks are bleak and bare,
 Yet, for the sake of victory,
 What will not Randolph dare?
 Descend, descend dark shades of Night!
 Sleep, seal the weary eyes,
 And deeply veil from all below,
 From doubting friend and watchful foe,
 The perilous emprize!"

With thirty chosen warriors
 The gallant Randolph goes
 To wrest Dun-Edin's castled height
 From the grasp of foreign foes.
 The way is steep, the way is long,
 The rocks are bleak and bare,
 But gently plays o'er each dark brow
 The grateful summer air.

The summit of the dizzy crag
They gain, that venturous crew,—
Above them sounds the warder's heel,
The quick patrol, the clanging steel,
The watchwords faint and few,—
Then grasped each hand the murderous brand,
For his weapon Randolph drew;—
"Forward, brave hearts! and scale the walls!
Be he who shrinks accurst!
Nay! I myself will be your guide,
In the path of danger and of pride
Must Randolph tread the first!"
"St. George for Merrie England!" loud
The startled sentry calls,
But the cold steel gleams before his eye,
And ere his challenge meets reply,
Low at his post he falls.
In wild confusion from their rest
The hurrying warders spring—
Long was the strife with perils fraught
But triumph blessed the arm that fought
For Scotland and her King.

The shades of night have rolled away,
The morn breaks o'er the sea,
And, floating on the joyous air,
Displays the flag of Scotland there
Its haughty blazonry.

"Hew down the walls! here never more
 The foe shall shelter find,
 Nor rampart, nor portcullised gate,
 Nor buttress, tower, nor parapet,
 Will Randolph leave behind!
 The foe is strong, our ranks are few,
 Our fortress is the glen;
 But when our homes are safe once more,
 The strangers driven from our shore,—
 We'll build them up again;
 And blither carols shall they hear,
 Than ever roused the echoes near
 In Malcolm's glorious reign!"
 The joy-bells ring out merrily,
 The hour of dread is o'er,
 And Dun-Edin's portly citizens
 Are crowding to the door;
 And many a blessing, many a prayer
 From her homes young Randolph bore.
 Long, long shall Scotland praise the hour
 When that brave deed was done,
 And the father oft with sparkling eyes,
 Shall tell his listening son,
 How Randolph broke the Saxon yoke,
 And the Maiden Tower was won!

III.

Across the Border Marches
The baffled foe hath fled ;
Before him smile his native glades,
Behind him lie the dead.
“ Our peaceful homes are desolate,
And on the rising gale
The voice of maid and mother swells
One universal wail.
Let us too cross the Marches !
Let us bare the vengeful steel !
The sorrow he hath brought to us,
Now be it his to feel ! ”
On, through the Yorkshire valleys,
The eager warriors ride,
Douglas and Randolph in the van
Are hasting side by side.
The monk retreats within his cell,
The hermit tells his beads,
When he hears across the dusty road
The tramp of those wild steeds ;
The peasant from his cottage home
In trembling haste doth fly ;

No more the thatch and lattice pane
 Shall greet his longing eye;
 Ruins and trampled harvests,
 And the burning hamlet's flames,
 Attest the strength of Moray's Lord,
 The wrath of dark Sir James.

Within his tent King Edward sleeps,
 His warriors guard him well;—
 But there creeps a band in the still midnight
 Past the lonely sentinel;
 And swords are clashing in the tents,
 And blood begins to flow,
 And, Douglas! Douglas! loud and high
 Peals through the night the battle cry
 Of England's dreaded foe!
 The camp is roused,—from east and west
 The steel-clad legions pour;
 Still dealing death on every side,
 Back the mysterious foemen ride,
 And the earth is still once more.
 "To vengeance and to victory
 Shall the morrow guide our men!"
 So spake the King,—but morning's light
 Beheld no squadrons on the height,
 No stragglers in the glen.

But fearful tales of nightly fray
The trembling rustics bring;
Sweeps that dark band like rushing wind
That leaves but woe and death behind
Its devastating wing—
And wrath and shame have filled the breast
Of England's dauntless King.
Like two bright meteors, flashing oft
Through the tempest's mantle grey,
Now seen, now lost, they speed along
By hall or lonely glade, and long
Shall England rue the day,
When her bravest ones and Scotland's sons
First met in mortal fray.
Then cried the proud Plantagenet:
"Now, by my father's sword!
I would give England's crown this day
To vanquish Moray's Lord!"
For the crimson-cushion banner
Was ever in the van,
When, prizing honour more than life,
The soldier girt him to the strife,
As best beseems a man;
What time o'er long-contested plains
The crimson torrents ran.

IV.

What news hath o'er the Scottish camp
 A sudden shadow cast?
 Hath the foe once more, with flame and gore,
 The rocky frontier passed,
 And they who checked his proud career,
 Succumbed to him at last?
 Not so! not so! the Saxon foe
 Still lurks within his den,
 And the Border lines are guarded well
 By bands of valiant men;
 But grief o'er those stout hearts hath power,
 And withering is Hope's sweet flower
 Never to bloom again!
 For he who ruled our destinies
 In triumph and in woe,
 The darling of chivalric hearts,
 On the bed of death lies low,
 And Scotland to her centre reels,
 As with a mortal blow.
 Silent and sad the warriors
 Around him take their stand;
 The Knight of Bothwell o'er him bends,
 The last of all the chosen friends,
 The gay and gallant band,

That wont to ride in martial pride
At good King Robert's hand.
"My task is done, my race is run,"
'Twas thus Earl Randolph said,
"And soon above this wrinkled brow
Shall the funeral turf be spread—
The trust our Master gave to me,
Bothwell, to thee I yield;
Be thou the chief of Scotland's realm
In council and in field,—
Be to her King a loving sire,
To her mourning sons a shield.
Old comrade, blessings on thee rest!
And prouder, happier far
Than I, mayst thou the end behold
Of this protracted war,
And plant the olive branch of Peace
On our distracted shore!
My sons! my sons!—Stern Duty's voice
Hath called you from me now,
Ye will not hear my parting words,
Nor kiss my clay-cold brow,—
Yet, oh! I charge ye by the love
Of him who was your sire,
To blend the gentleness of age
With youth's impetuous fire;
To strive with danger, toil, and pain,
Right manfully and well,—

And, when death bows your stainless crest,
 Be the battle-field your couch of rest,
 And the trumpet-blast your knell!
 From the pomp and pride of earthly things
 I am passing fast away;
 The careless hand, the erring soul,
 May God assoil this day!
 He, who in triumph or defeat
 Hath been my only stay!"

With book and ebon Crucifix
 The grey-haired priest draws near;
 Slowly depart the weeping friends,
 As he to those faint words attends
 Which none but he must hear.
 Ah! short I ween the shrift will be!
 Few sins are there to show;—
 A nobler and a truer heart,
 One more unskilled in treacherous art,
 Ne'er beat on earth below,—
 None braver in the battle's stour,
 And none, in triumph's sanguined hour,
 More generous to the foe!
 The prayers are said, the rites are done,
 The solemn blessing given,
 And the hero's soul is hovering
 On the dim confines of Heaven—

There was sorrow in the old priest's look,
There was moisture in his eye,
As round the couch the warriors drew,
The brave, the noble, and the true,
In voiceless awe, for well they knew
The last sad hour was nigh.


With pale hands clasped upon his breast,
And lips that moved in prayer,
Scarce conscious of the tears that flowed,
Lay the dying chieftain there,
And the soft breeze of the summer eve
Lifted his tangled hair.
Hark! hark! what strain comes up the glen,
So dirge-like and so clear,
As though a spirit's hand had swept
The trembling chords, then paused, and wept
A sympathizing tear?
And see! the wind hath caught the flag
Hung idly at the door,
That flag that oft triumphantly
Waved, Randolph's march before,—
But the eye that joyed its course to track
Shall watch it never more!
Then tears burst forth,—not sudden tears
That from the eyelids start,
But drops of bitterest anguish, wrung
From out the very heart.

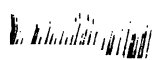
They thought of Scotland's deadly foe,
 Of her Monarch's beardless youth—
 Who now the struggling bark shall guide?
 Who curb the nobles' haughty pride
 With the mighty voice of Truth?
 Oh! Randolph in the fight's red hour
 Oft perilled life and limb;—
 Count o'er your oldest, proudest thanes,—
 Full many a glorious name remains,
 But none dare vie with him,
 Who lieth now with pallid brow,
 And eyes all glazed and dim!—
 Peace! peace! he stirs,—he wakes once more,
 And his failing hands doth raise,
 And on the flag he loved so well
 He bends a parting gaze,
 And each tearful eye hath followed his,
 In sorrowful amaze.
 They turned—alas! it was but clay
 Which now they looked upon;—
 Softly, with sunset's latest ray,
 From strife and tumult passed away
 Great Randolph of Strathdon!



Pluscanden.

HALF sheltered by the green hill side,
Mid trees that saw its ancient pride,
Decked with the ivy's trailing bands,
Silent the ruined Abbey stands.
The rough wind moans, the big rain falls
On roofless courts and crumbling walls,
And where the holy Mass was sung,
The wild birds build and rear their young.
Ascend yon damp and mossy stair,
Survey the scene so wildly fair;
The arch, the pride of former days,
Its fair proportions still displays;
The trophies of the sculptor's skill
Adorn the porch and cornice still;
And Gothic windows rise between
The dark, damp aisle and leafy screen;
But silence reigns, save when our tread
Explores the mansions of the dead,
Or echoes from the hills prolong
The cushat's melancholy song.





What vigils, in the times of old,
 Did those unconscious walls behold,
 When good monks paced the cloistered aisle,
 Chanted and told their beads the while;
 Or tended with assiduous care
 The shaven lawn and gardens fair;
 Or trimmed, perchance, the midnight oil,
 And bent them to their patient toil,
 Till flushed the withered cheek of age
 As glowed more bright the laboured page.
 Here Virtue in a troublous time
 Found shelter from the hand of Crime;
 Here Sorrow, chastened and subdued,
 Her heavenward path in peace pursued;
 Guilt strove its penitence to prove
 By deeds of charity and love;
 And Learning, flying from the jars
 Of servile courts and feudal wars,
 Sent forth her bright, though fitful rays
 Upon those dark and lawless days.
 The monkish rule hath passed away,—
 Who dwells amid the cloisters grey?
 Of mountaineers a hardy band,
 All swift of foot and sure of hand,
 Led by a chief of ancient name,*
 And lineage not unknown to Fame—

* THOMAS MACKENZIE, of Pluscarden, made an unsuccessful attempt to aid Montrose in his last campaign—1651.

Thy memory lingers in this spot,
Brave cavalier, true-hearted Scot!
Thou, when false friends did shrink away,—
When those who girt them to the fray,
Wearied by many a trial past,
To fraud and wrong succumbed at last,—
Thy warm, chivalric heart didst bring
To aid and serve a throneless King!
Vain was the strife—a traitor's blow
Soon laid thy great commander low;
No triumph cheered thy dauntless eye—
We know not where thine ashes lie;
Yet, while Romance, from age to age,
Still gilds our history's chequered page,
Tradition loves to honour those
Who fought and bled with good Montrose!

The wars are over! scattered round,
The gravestones pave the hallowed ground,
Albeit, with tangled weeds o'ergrown,
Forgotten lies the crumbling stone.
Oh, lonely pile! thou'rt sanctified
By more than mortal pomp and pride;—
By labour vast and counsel sage,
Fruits of the quaint monastic age;—
By courage high and honours bright,
And all that marks the belted Knight;—

Yet more, far more, by all the woes
That here found comfort and repose;
The dreams that faded from the earth,—
The hopes that perished in their birth,—
The busy fancies, now at rest,
All garnered in earth's quiet breast;—
The spreading tree, the desert place,
Bear of these vanished lives no trace,
Yet doth their memory linger still
By the green vale and wooded hill;
It bids a softer shadow fall
O'er the grey tower and ivied wall,
Broods o'er the solitudes around,
And makes the ruin holy ground!

5th September, 1855.





The Tower of Blervie.

FRAGMENTS of grey and massive stone,
A steep and broken turret stair,
Deserted chambers, dark and lone,
Where roams at will the autumn air,—

And ruined battlements which seem
To frown, though all around them smile,
And the glad sun, with jocund gleam,
On the worn summit rests awhile.—

Fit scene this were to muse and call
Back days of revelry and war,
When feasted in the ample hall
The wild retainers of Dunbar;

The Tower of Blervie.

487

And the proud chief, in danger's hour,
Saw his dark reivers, hasting thence,
Gaze fondly on the strong white tower,
At once their beacon and defence.

Away! ye visions of the past,
Of crime and strife,—why haunt me now?
A glorious light the sunbeams cast
Upon the lovely land below;

The grassy slopes, the fruitful soil,
Where swept of yore the martial train,—
Now peasants ply their peaceful toil,
And bind in sheaves the ripened grain;

The heath-clad hills, the rugged ways,
The old pine forests waving free,
The far blue mountains, at whose base
Dashes the broad and placid sea.—

Oh, fairy scene! When I recall
Life's happiest hours, before my eyes
Shall Fancy bid the broken wall
And the white tower of Blervie rise;



488

The Tower of Blervie.

And the gay laugh, the ready jest,
The friendly faces smiling there,
All shrined in Memory's faithful breast,
Shall make the vision doubly fair!

7th September, 1855.



The Sea Shore.

UPON the rocky shore,
Where loud the billows roar,
A friendly group stood gazing at the sky,
And weaving many a chain
Of wishes, wild and vain
As the light feathery spray that passed them by.

“To regions far away
Bear me, thou ocean gray!
Where the young leaves their dewy wealth unfold,
And flowers are blooming wild!”
So cried the rosy child,
And the breeze wantoned with his locks of gold.

“Oh tide — Oh, rushing tide!”
The blue-eyed maiden sighed,
“Oft danger lurks beneath thy sparkling foam,—
Speed o’er the waters dark,
Oh! speed the gallant bark
That bears the loved one to his boyhood’s home!”

“Thou proudly-crested wave!”
Murmured the youth so brave,
“Symbol of pride and power and mighty sway!
Mine be a proud career,
And if the end be near,
Let Glory point the path and light the way!”

A widowed mother spoke,
Whose voice the stillness broke
With its soft whisper, musical and mild,—
“From the keen stroke of Fate
That left me desolate,
From sin and sorrow, save, oh! save my child!”

In grave and earnest mood
The thoughtful statesman stood,
The rocky margin of the waves beside—
“Be mine the power that moulds
The human will, and holds
Unchecked, through peace and war, its course of pride!”

A frail and aged man,
With visage pale and wan,
Bent listlessly above the surging wave;
“Earth has no gifts for one
Whose sand is nearly run,
I ask no future but the quiet grave!”

The Sea Shore.

491

Thus, to the moaning tide
Those human voices sighed,
Pining and thirsting for the hours to be;—
And on, and ever on,
With strange mysterious tone,
Murmured and rolled the everlasting sea!







The Churchyard of Mog.

AMID rich harvest-fields it lies,
In solitude profound,
The sun looks with his burning eyes
On trees that close it round;
But o'er the wild deserted place
A shadow broodeth still,—
There oft the careless idler strays,
The cattle rove at will.

The head-stones sinking in the grass,
With green moss crusted o'er,
Whence Time's rude hands will soon efface
The names that once they bore;—
The tall rank weeds, the lichens gray,
That grow unmarked, unchecked,—
All tell a tale of slow decay,
Indifference and neglect.



The Churchyard of Moy.

493

And is there none the path to tend,
And pious care bestow,
For love of some departed friend
Whose ashes rest below?
Few years have sped, since o'er the ground
Arose the funeral prayer;—
And of her children's deepest wound
Does earth no record bear?

It matters little where the clay
In its last sleep is laid;
It cannot hear the breezes play
Above its narrow bed;
It cannot feel the perfumed breath
Of the young joyous Spring,—
Nor echoes in the ear of Death
The strain the wild birds sing.

And yet, methinks, 'twere best to lie
In some secluded spot,
Where the broad river murmurs by
The peasant's cheerful cot;
Where vernal sounds and sights abound,
And fragrant flowerets bloom,
Shedding a tender grace around
The melancholy tomb!

The Churchyard of Mon.

The heart still binds with living things
The memory of the dead,
E'en though we hope the spirit's wings
For brighter realms are spread ;
We fain would leave some token here,
Some low, memorial stone,
Of us, in many a passing year,
To speak when we are gone.

'Tis sad to know that, when we rest
Beneath the cold, damp sod,
The earth will be as fair and blest
As when its paths we trod ;—
The bitterest thought that wrings the heart,
And clouds our mortal lot,
Is, from all cherished things to part,
To die, and be forgot !

Farewell to Morayshire.

FAREWELL to thee, Moray! the land of tradition,
Through whose quaint storied relics the fancy still
 roams!
Farewell to thy castles, with strange legends haunted!
Farewell to thy cornfields, and bright happy homes!

To the mouldering Abbey, the ruined Cathedral,
In whose long grass-grown cloisters the silent dead
 lie,—
To the desolate sand-hills, the green fairy forests,
Where the dark mountain torrent sweeps murmuring by,

The rocks of Relugas, so grand and so lonely,
Where it dashes and foams with a wild, ceaseless
 wail,—
The bleak highland moors, and the calm sheltered valley
That smiles in the shadow of castled Dumphail;—

And Spynie, its massive old fortalice rearing,
Though the sounds that once roused its wild echoes
have ceased;
On the turret still moulder the mitred escutcheons,
But sheep fill the courts of the warrior-priest!

And the hill of the Romach, whose dark pines and
larches
A broad shadow cast o'er the smooth lake beneath,
Where the young birdies sport, and the tall rocks are
peeping
Through a veil of brown lichen and blossoming heath.

From thy battlements, Cawdor! we gazed on the moun-
tains
And the green valley bathed in a rich autumn glow,
Trode the wild, wooded glen, where the birch-tree and
rowan,
And the long fern leaves droop o'er the waters
below—

Explored each old room, from the dark vaulted dungeon
Where the magical thorn still its branches doth rear,
To the low, narrow cell, where the fugitive trembled
As the steps of the ruthless pursuer drew near;

Farewell to Morayshire.

497

And, musing on stories of feud and rebellion,
On mighty achievements and glories gone by,
We passed the wild heath and the green fertile meadows,
And the cool shady nooks where the villages lie.

Oh! bright days of autumn! when shower and sunshine
Bestowed a fresh theme on our light-hearted mirth;
Oh! dear, loving friends, whose kind greetings imparted
A lustre and charm to the beautiful earth!

Long slumbering fancies and dim recollections
Of the days of my childhood, stole over my brain;—
As some beautiful dream which the morning had scattered,
Returns in the twilight to charm us again.

And for this, O fair Moray! this cherished remembrance,
This warm-hearted welcome, from thee I go forth
And breathe, as I view thy blue mountains receding,
A blessing upon thee, dear Land of the North!

13th September.





The Poet's Hour.

WHEN should we open the Poet's scroll,
And yield our minds to his sweet control,
Till Fancy, loosed from all earthly band,
Roams and revels in Fairyland?

In the early morn, when the rose-clouds lie
Like gems on the breast of the blushing sky,
When the sun comes forth, and the dew-drops start
In tears from the depths of the Flower Queen's heart—
Ere Labour and Care their iron chain
Have bound round thy weary soul again;
While thy thoughts are pure as the balmy air,
And thy heart is refreshed by its first sweet prayer,—
Then read, for the Poets of olden time
Were wayfarers, bound to a distant clime;
Like thee, they suffered, and toiled, and wrought,
But their lives were bright with a beautiful thought,—
And they will tell thee what sunbeams smile
O'er the dreary paths of our world of toil,

Coming early, and tarrying long
With him who in trial is brave and strong.
Like a Gothic window through which the light
Streams on the pavement so cold and white,
Flinging its purple and golden rays,
Rich with the fancies of elder days,
Shadow of warrior and saint serene,
Mitred bishop and sceptred queen,—
On the ground where the student hath dreaming paced,
Where the young rush by in their fiery haste,
Where the cheek of the timid maiden glows,
And the mourner weeps, and the dead repose;—
So shall the Poet's magic lay
Haunt thy raptured spirit the live-long day,
Till across thy thorny path be thrown
A gorgeous colouring all its own,
And his musical voice like a potent spell
In the inmost recess of thy spirit dwell.

In the dreamy noon of a summer's day,
When the air is sweet with the new-mown hay,
When the flocks by the side of the hedge-rows lie,
And the reaper awhile lays his sickle by—
Then sit thee down in the pleasant shade
That's by some bowering willow made,
Where the light falls through, subdued and dim,
And the young leaves seem singing a low, sweet hymn,

While a clear brook murmurs and laughs away
 To the chime of the Poet's rumbelay.
 For they loved the sunshine, those birds of old,
 When the earth was bathed in a flood of gold:
 They loved the showers of the tranquil glade
 And the grove in its summer pomp arrayed,—
 Would we feel the full charm of their musical rhyme,
 We must read it abroad in the summer time!
 Yet pause at times, and let mine eyes
 Dwell on the bright scene that near thee lies,
 And marvel which it were best to scan,
 This beautiful world, or the heart of man!

In thy quiet home, at the evening hour,
 When the birds are at rest in the leafy bower,
 And the setting sun casts a crimson glow
 On the garden walks and then fades slow,
 As darker and darker the gray twilight
 heralds the solemn approach of night.
 Till the pictures hang on the dusky wall
 Dream like the phantoms grotesque and tall:
 And the work is done, and we scarce can trace
 The lineaments of each cherished face.—
 Recall of battles and men of might,—
 Legend of sports all ended in wine,—
 Lay of the green wood and shadowy grove,—
 Tale of beauty and song of love:—

Read on, read on, with a glistening eye,—
Then close the volume and lay it by,
And thou and thy listeners each shall be
Wrapped in his own sweet reverie.



In the dark midnight, when the world is asleep,
The student his lonely watch doth keep;
And the cares and the troubles of life depart
From the eddying waters of his heart,
As with calm and child-like soul he attends
To the lessons taught by his voiceless friends,—
Oh! it was no fable, the tale which said
That the chimes of the midnight aroused the dead,
And sent them forth from their place of rest
To haunt the scenes which they loved the best!
The spirit, set free by the hand of Night,
Sails forth on her pinions of viewless might,
Drinks deep of the fount where Thought's treasures lie,
Wanders mid fancies and musings high;
In a world unknown she furls her wing,
And hears the song that the planets sing—
For the Poet withdraws the veil, which seems
To hide from our gaze the land of dreams,
And the words that charm our listening ears
Are bright revelations of higher spheres,
Strange echoes, caught from the golden lyre
That responds to the touch of the heavenly choir.



Forget not the Dead.


FORGET not the Dead, though their memory waken
Regrets for the sunshine of Life's vanished spring,—
The wind, by whose rude breath the rose-leaves are shaken,
Their rich odour bears on its wild-rushing wing,—
Bright looks the sun from the blue dome of Heaven,
Whence the gloom of the tempest but lately hath fled,—
And soothing, though sad, are the memories given
To the fond, faithful heart that forgets not the Dead.

If the blossoms that grew round thy pathway be scattered,
And faded the treasures that once seemed thine own,—
If the idols that filled thy soul's temple be shattered,
And thou mid the ruins art wandering alone,—
'Though the lips that are silent for ever, seem speaking
From the songs that they loved, from the books they
once read—
'Though thine eyes overflow and thy heart-strings are
breaking,—
In the homes where they dwelt—oh! forget not the Dead!



When the young morn is up, all her beauties revealing,
And the birds carol gaily in bush or in brake,—
When the gray, dusky shadows of twilight are stealing
Like a veil o'er the face of the motionless lake—
In the tumult of day, when the heart vainly yearneth
For the voices whose music for ever is fled,—
At night, when the dream of thy young joy returneth,—
In gloom or in gladness—forget not the Dead!

Deep, deep in thy heart be their memory cherished,
Like the flame on the altars, of yore deemed divine,
Round each thought let the links of affections that perished,
Like the dark ivy's tendrils, for ever entwine;—
By the fair morning visions the young heart possesses,—
The nobler pursuits to which manhood is wed—
By the mute, chastened sorrow, which wounds and yet
blesses,—
By the hopes of the future—forget not the Dead!



The Mirror of Life.

THERE was a sage—'twas in the olden time,
When yet the earth was full of mysteries,
Ere cold Philosophy, with passionless hand,
Had rent the veil, whose deep and spectral gloom
Gave birth to ghostly legend and romance;
In an old hall he dwelt, a grand old hall,
Well stored with tapestry and carved oak
And fading portraits of his buried sires;
And there were haunted rooms, and dungeon vaults,
And narrow passages, through which the wind
Howled like the ravings of a prisoned sprite.
It was his birth-place,—there his youth had passed,
Wayward and wild as an impetuous stream;—
But there were legends of a hopeless love,
And a low grave close by the village spire,
Wherein his heart was buried. — He went forth
To distant lands, and joined the dusky tribes,
Trode burning sands, and quaffed mysterious lore;
But when the Autumn days grew dark and chill,

The old man sought his boyish home again.
No friendly voices bade him welcome there,—
The old were numbered with the dead,—the young
Were scattered far and wide,—grey were the hairs
And dim the eyes of all who shared his sports;
And those who filled their places knew him not,
And looked on him in wonder—for his lore
Had raised him far above his kind; he stood
On a strange eminence, alone, unfriended,
And thence looked down,—yet with benignant eyes.
It might be that his learning wrapped his soul
(For learning never chills the genial heart),
And 'neath the snows of age, the warm fresh feelings
Lay hidden deep within the soil, and ready
To blossom at one ray of kindly sunshine,—
Or the vain dream of love, so long concealed
And buried in the proud man's breast, had been
A blessed spring amid the ruins there,
A fountain in the desert,—a white dove
Nestling among the lone and blackening rafters;
For true Affection, like the words of Peace,
The Apostolic blessing, if repulsed
From jealous and unfriendly doors, returns
With sevenfold beauty to the parent heart.

One night a stranger with the Student sate;
Long converse held they of the storied past,
The busy present, and the misty shroud

That hides the untrodden future. Strange it
was,

And beautiful, to see that grey-haired man
Listening to the wild sallies of his guest;
Recalling, as he spake, the promise fair
And the high hopes of his all-joyous youth,
As when the sky, from which at evening hour
The murky storm departs, serene and pure
Sees itself mirrored in a bright clear lake,—
He was a stately tree, whereon the fruit
Hung in ripe clusters, and the leaves were clad,
All red and golden, in their autumn garb,
And one by one fell slowly,—but the boy
Was the fresh-opened flower that from its root
Gazed ever upwards with its frank blue eyes,
And questioned of the bright and sunny skies,
And the wild stormy night above its crest.
There was a pause, and each in thought was lost,
Treading the secret mazes of his heart,
Till with impetuous voice the youth burst forth:—

“I love not the chime of the tinkling rill
As it lazily steals round the breezy hill
And under the willow tree—
No! the dashing foam and the tempest shock
When the cataract springs o’er the rifted rock,
And the voice of the storm, for me!

"I ask not for wealth, or length of days,
Nor the treasures that lowly natures praise,
The calm and quiet breast;—
I could not dwell on the village soil,
Where the day brings its round of stated toil,
And the night its dreamless rest;—

"For I would pass like a meteor proud,
Scattering afar the lurid cloud,
And lighting the stormy sea;
I would leave such a name from age to age,
That all who turn the historic page
Should pause, to remember me!

"I have read the triumphs of heroes old,
The mighty captains, the great, the bold,
Whose swords won the diadem;
And my cheek was flushed, and my soul was
stirred,
For the inner voice, like a spirit's word,
Bade me go forth and be like them.

"Is there not joy in the conqueror's heart
When the routed hosts of the foe depart,
And the stubborn strife is won,—
When the cities shake with their martial mirth,
And the laurel is laid by our Mother Earth
At the feet of her mightiest son?"

The other answered not, but slowly rose,
And led him to the window's deep recess,
Where, in its massive and outlandish frame,
A mirror hung, reflecting calmly back
The moon, begirt with all her starry train,
And the broad landscape in its robe of snow.
"Land of the sun!" 'twas thus the old man cried,
"From thee this talisman I bore, the gift
Of one, alas! who slumbers in the tomb,
A mighty intellect, a warm, true heart,
Dear to me as my own!—Ay, look, my son!
Look silently upon it; from its depths
'Twill shape an answer to thy heart's wild thought."
He looked, and lo! as in a troubled dream,
He saw the Conqueror on prancing steed
Ride o'er the field of victory; afar
The baffled squadrons fled, but his dark eye
Followed their track no longer; it was fixed
Proudly, yet thoughtfully, upon the sky,
As though from some commanding height he gazed
Down the long vista of the coming years,
And saw his glory, like a fiery star,
Lighting the dim horizon. As he passed
The wounded raised their weary eyes to his,
Rose from the crimson ground, and sank in death,
The note of triumph quivering on their lip.
Anon, it was a crowded market-place,
Where gay processions moved, and banners streamed

From out the open casements; flowers were flung,
Young, bright-eyed flowers, on the dusty way,
And mothers raised their rosy children high
To look upon the hero. There was mirth,
And song, and revel in the banquet hall;
The rich wine mantled in the golden cup,
And at each pause broke in with joyous note
The martial music. Then the scene was changed!
Slowly the moon rose o'er the battle-field,
But pomp and triumph there no longer veiled
The fruits of the long struggle—there the dead
Lay, calm and smiling as in happy sleep,
Or wearing still the frown of deadliest hate.
And there the dying—Oh! that this should be!
That these, the loved, the prayed-for, these whose smile
Was sunshine to so many kindred hearts,
Whose voice was music to their souls—should lie
Alone, in their last agony, with none
To hear their parting words, and watch through tears
Their entrance on the strange and unknown way!
Slowly the moon rose, like an angel grieving
O'er the foul sins of man; and lo! the veil
Was lifted from a thousand distant homes;
He saw the mourners in their sable weeds,
Treading the princely halls; and stifled voice
And moistened eye told of the grief within,
The wound which pomp and pride can never heal!
He saw the white-walled village home, the scene

Of happiness and peace—now grief sat, shrouded
In the deserted room, the vacant place,
And in the evening prayer was breathed no more
The voice of him so cherished, so beloved,—
The brave who came not back!—And for the shouts
Of revelry and triumph,—hark! the sob
Of the young orphan, and the wailing moan
Of the lone, widowed mother. Some there were
Who wrapped them sternly in their robe of grief,
And walked through life with hearts that felt no more;
Others whose voices rent the startled air
With the wild cry of fierce and impotent wrath;
And some, of gentler mood, who to their hearts
In meekness did that bitter sorrow fold,
And in their agony sat down to die.
Sternly the Student spake: “Ere by the sword
One man may raise himself above his kind
And leave a name to brighten History’s page,
Thousands must perish, tens of thousands mourn,
And sin, and suffer—’tis the price of Fame!”

“Nay, father! nay—I crave no more
The laurel whose roots are steeped in gore,
Whose leaves with tears are wet;
The scene to my trembling gaze revealed,
The fearful scene of yon battle-field,
I never could forget!

"The wail of the mourner in mine ear
Would sound when my boyhood's friends were near,
When the gorgeous feast was spread;
And the brow of the dying, so ghastly white,
Would rise night and day on my aching sight,
Would haunt my dying bed!

"There are laurels which grow on a brighter
shore,
There are voices, sweet voices, which evermore
Speak to the gifted heart,
And beautiful paths all crowned with flowers,
Leading through meadows and matchless bowers
To the wonderful realms of Art.

"The painter, whose strong creative hand
Reveals the charms of that glorious land;—
The poet, who never dies,
For the rich and the poor, the old and the young,
Love the strains by the minstrel sung,
When the green turf o'er him lies.—

"These are the happy, the good, the great,—
These baffle the grave and the stroke of Fate,—
To them be all blessings given!
Like friends, dear friends, they walk by our side
Through the devious paths of the world so wide—
Like angels they point to Heaven!"

He ceased, and yet again a vision slow
Across the mirror passed; and he beheld
The artist in his lowly chamber, bending
From hour to hour above his *daily* task,
Unconscious that the day drew to its close;
For glorious were the forms that grew and glowed
Beneath his rapid fingers, and his soul
Was hushed in silent ecstasy, entranced
With its own sweet creations. He looked down
Into the world of that rich-gifted heart,
And marked the hidden source, the caverns deep,
Where Inspiration, like a Naiad fair,
Dwelt amid wrecks, and gems, and drifting
weeds.
Then first he learned, and sorrowed at the
thought,
How little can the ablest hand portray
Of the bright fairy dreams that rise within!
But Weariness came oft, and Poverty,
Calling down Fancy from her airy throne,
Soiling with earthly stains her rainbow-wing,
While those for whom he toiled, the busy crowd,
Lavished their smiles on gems from foreign shores,
And dingy canvas of the olden time,
And gave no thought to him. And so he died
In want and bitterness of soul,—and then,
The crowd returning, mourned aloud for him,
Spoke of his mighty genius, and raised

A marble bust, to deck the grave of one
Who, living, vainly asked one word of praise!
He saw the Poet, when his brain was filled
With crowding fancies, and the bright ray shone
Full on his noble brow, yet Grief was there,—
Grief in the hour of triumph! The world rang
With his renown, and by the cheerful hearth,
And in the greenwood, were his verses sung,
Till tears bedewed the page, and hearts o'erflowed
With rapture, breathing on the Poet's name
A grateful benison. He heard it not!
The voice of praise scarce o'er his threshold
passed;

But Calumny was there, and envious tongues
Proclaimed aloud the secrets of his home,
And the vain writhings of the tortured mind—
Like a tall beacon on a rocky coast,
He felt the dashing of the cold, salt spray,
And heard the raging wind, but had no share
In the hid treasures of the fickle deep.
Then in his pride he rose, and joined the crowd,
Yea, bent him to their level,—but how poor
And paltry were their aims! for he had seen
The gates of Heaven opened, and no more
Could rest or joy on earth—he dwelt alone!
He made himself a world, a beauteous world,
But none might share its sceptre, and the heart
That yearned so oft for blessed household love,

Went forth as went the dove, and hovered o'er
The waste of many waters, chill and drear,
And, back returning, found no resting-place!

"If it be so!" the young man sadly cried,
"Why hath God planted in our breasts the love
For all that's great and beautiful—the thirst
For immortality, since th' end of all
Is bitterness and shame?"—The Student stood
Beside him, with his meek eyes raised to Heaven,
His hands were clasped, and his pale, lifted brow
Was holy as an angel's—thus he spake:—


"Youth! thou hast sighed for Fame,
The fragile wreath that thoughtless natures prize,
The cold though sparkling gem, the spell which lies
In one poor human name,—
Believe an old man's words—that path may lead
To Glory, but the victor's heart will bleed!

"Read well thy heart, my son!
The hidden springs of action all are there,—
'Twill teach thee what thy mission is, and where
Thy laurels should be won—
Then go, and with the bard's melodious voice,
Or hero's stalwart arm, make good thy choice.

"But, ere thou goest, beware
Of snares without, of foes within its cell!—
One talisman I give thee,—guard it well,—
The talisman of Prayer!
Oh! pray to God, and He, the changeless Friend,
Will guide thee safely to the promised end.

"Let, then, thy soul be strong
And steadfast, walking in the path of duty—
Religion, in her sweet and seraph beauty,
Shall dwell thy thoughts among;
With firm tho' gentle sway, shall rule thy mind
In perfect charity with all thy kind.

"So shall thy life be pure
From Envy's canker stain, from shame, and ruth;
And the sweet hopes that blossomed in thy youth
Shall strengthen and endure,
Till the dark world, where thou hast nobly striven,
Becomes the foretaste and the porch of Heaven!"







To Kate.

TIME was, with many a mirthful thought, of joyous
Fancy born,
I loved betimes to welcome back thy happy natal
morn,
And weave, in light fantastic rhymes, all sure to
please *thine* ear,
My wish for happiness and health, and all the heart
holds dear.

But sadder is my song to-day; I see thee once
again,
Stretched powerless upon the couch, the fevered
couch of pain;
Through days of grief and weariness, through
wakeful nights, procured
By sufferings — oh! how patiently, how silently
endured!



And lonely seems our household now, we miss thy
cheerful face,
And the kindly smile that ever beamed like sun-
shine from thy place;
We miss thy voice in converse oft, thy footstep on
the stair,
And thy wise and patient counsel, and thy quiet,
thoughtful care.



My sister! few thy years have been, yet marked
by pain and care;
And in thy young life's summer-time thou'rt lying
helpless there,
When thou, the gayest of the gay, 'midst friendly
groups shouldst be,
Treading across the sunny earth with footstep firm
and free.

We know that those God loveth best, He chastens
oft and sore,
That sorrow, by the Christian's side, is present
evermore,
That full and bitter is the cup to His elect ones
given,
And steep and rugged is the path they tread from
earth to Heaven.

Yet at times we question blindly, why this should
be thy share,
Why thou, the young and loving one, such heavy
doom shouldst bear;
Forgetting that, at His decree, each murmur should
be still,
And the heart should bow, as bows a reed, at His
all-righteous will.

To Him do we commit thee now, the darling of
our heart,
And pray, if He ordain it so, that thy trials may
depart.
That health once more may flush thy cheek, and
light thy pallid brow,
And future years make full amends for all thy
sufferings now.



12th Jan. 1856.



On the Launch of the "La Hogue."

You asked for some verses, when you went away,
In praise of the good ship you christen to-day;
But, after mature thought, I beg you'll excuse
From this unwelcome tribute, my Jacobite Muse.
She might fly from the Pole to the tropical clime,—
Ransack all the mouldering archives of Time,—
Paint the flash of the tempest,—e'en master the *brogue*,—
But not pen one line in the praise of "La Hogue!"

What! sit down to write of that unhappy day
When the hopes of the Stuart were blasted for aye,
When the old King, whose heart beat for England alone,
Saw his last efforts fail for his ancestors' throne?
No! Poesy loves on great actions to dwell,—
Of honour and changeless devotion to tell,—
Her bright eye still glistens, her pearly cheek glows
At the names of the Gordon, Dundee, and Montrose;
But she shrinks from all contact with treason and ill,
And, shuddering, flies from the thought of *Dutch Bill*!



520 On the Launch of the "La Hogue."

Had you chosen Cospatrick,—some triumph of war,—
Or the name we so wished for—the "Duncan Dunbar"—
Oh! ~~then~~, she, with burning enthusiasm fired,
Whole bushels of verses had straightway inspired.
As it is, on the wings of Affection upborne,
She repeats all the kind words that greet you this morn,—
All the wishes on such great occasions in vogue,—
For the sake of the owner, and not for "La Hogue!"

16th July, 1855.

To Duncan Dunbar.

WITH A CRIBBAGE BOARD.

It was wisely ordained, that one day at the least,
Should be held in all households an annual feast,
That Friendship and Love the dark winter should cheer,
And Affection illumine the close of the year!

'Tis the season of gifts, of kind wishes and true,
And both these, dear Uncle! we offer to you—
Though the first be but small, yet remember, I pray,
That the second are changeless, and lasting for aye.

With regard to the Cribbage—we know it hath power
Your cares to beguile at a reasonable hour,
(That is, before nine), and we fain would recall,
With your evening's amusement, a thought of us all.

But, remembering how often, with jesting uproar,
You've insisted on marking an illegal score,
This slight admonition, in form of request,
To your Worship we humbly propose to suggest:—

Don't be too quick in pegging—a doubt, haste reveals;
With a Knave in your hand, don't cry, "*Two for his
heels!*"

Lest some should remind you—a very sad job!—
Even J. P.'s at times may get "*One for their nob!*"

But, trusting you will not sage counsels disdain,
Because they're expressed in a jocular strain,
The lesson I close, and with gladness indite
This cordial wish, in which all must unite—

May Happiness mark all the months as they glide,—
And, gathering close round your warm fireside,
Kind hearts, smiling faces, each Christmas appear,—
And may Time bring you many a Happy New Year!

25th December, 1854.



To My Dearest Ewesie.

WHEN last, amid the dancing throng,
I said farewell to thee,
I knew not, on this coming morn,
That we should severed be;
And that my *hand* would have to trace
The wishes manifold,
And all the heartfelt words my *lips*
More willingly had told.

The fervent prayers, so oft renewed
Through every changing year,—
Yet ever dear, as Music's voice,
To charmed Affection's ear;
The thought that to a few brief hours
Such holiness imparts—
Those Saints'-days in the calendar
Of fond and faithful hearts.

To My Dearest Ewesie.

My Sister! when my glance I turn
To scenes for ever flown,
To all those bright and blessed hours
Which thou and I have known;
To merry games, when Earth was but
A pathway strewn with flowers,—
To studious thoughts, and mingled tears
In Life's maturer hours.

And when with vain inquiring eyes
I towards the future look,
And strive some fragment leaf to turn
Of Time's unopened book,—
I can but breathe this wish alone,
That coming years may find
Us joined, as we have ever been
Alike in heart and mind;

That all the days Life hath in store,
Of bright or rainy weather,
Comfort, and hope, and joy may gain,
By being shared together;—
Yes! well I know, whatever end
Our onward paths may find,
The chords that link us closely now
Shall never be untwined.

7th November, 1856.

To My Mother.

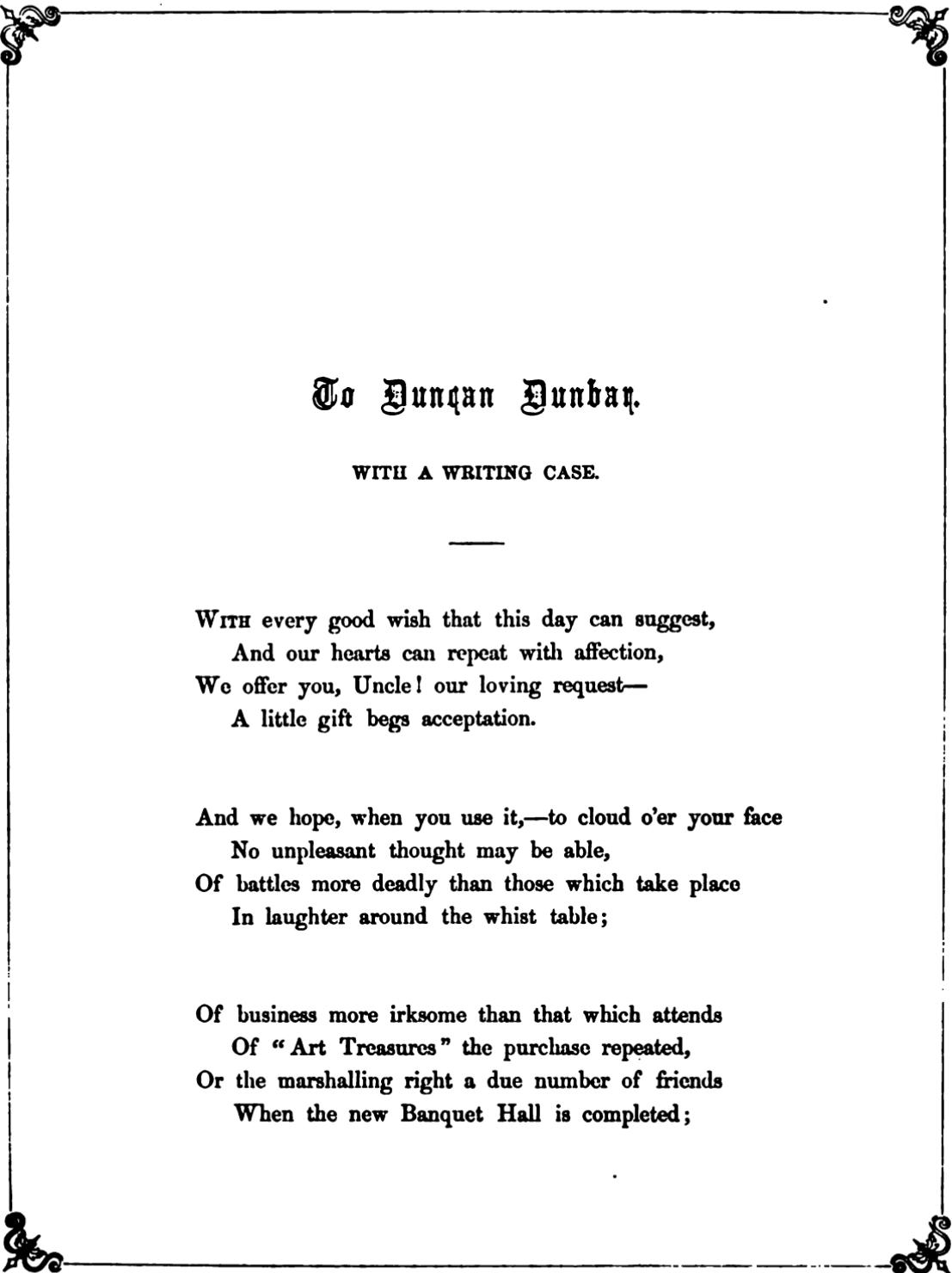
HAD I the magic wand, that rules o'er Fancy's broad
domain,
And bids the charmed world listen to its sweet and
witching strain,—
The gems of Thought, and deathless flowers of bright-
eyed Poesy,
In one rich garland would I wreath, and offer them
to thee.

Alas! my weak, unskilful hand in vain would grasp
the lyre,
It cannot wake its thrilling chords, or rouse its
slumbering fire;
Yet, were the Poet's gift mine own, too cold the
words would be
To frame a song of gratitude for all I owe to thee!

Yet, take my verse! for well I know, tho' homely be
the lay,
One gentle look, one loving word, the effort will
repay;
Less dear to thee are tutored rhymes, or feats of
laboured Art,
Than the warm, fervent thought that springs from
the fountain of the heart.

Like the glad ray of Summer's sun, that sheds o'er
land and sea
Its flood of golden radiance — such is thy smile
to me;
And sweeter far the words of praise from thy dear
lips that flow,
Than all the vain and fleeting joys that Earth could
e'er bestow!

BALNAGUITH, 8th March, 1854.



To Duncan Dunbar.

WITH A WRITING CASE.

With every good wish that this day can suggest,
And our hearts can repeat with affection,
We offer you, Uncle! our loving request—
A little gift begs acceptance.

And we hope, when you use it,—to cloud o'er your face
No unpleasant thought may be able,
Of battles more deadly than those which take place
In laughter around the whist table;

Of business more irksome than that which attends
Of "Art Treasures" the purchase repeated,
Or the marshalling right a due number of friends
When the new Banquet Hall is completed;

Of losses more heavy, or harder to bear,
Of causes of keener vexation
Than the shilling, or sixpence, which sometimes we hear
You bewail with such loud lamentation.

And often, as Christmas returns with its cheer,
And Earth greets the blithe New Year's morning,
May they find you surrounded with happiness here,
And bring you all comfort and blessing.

Christmas Day, 1858.



To Duncan Dunbar.

THE morn that's breaking o'er the sea
And blushing in the skies,
Finds us less merry than we were
When last we saw it rise;

For, counting up the many days
Of pleasant summer weather,
All the adventures, all the laughs
We've lately had together,—

We think it hard — oh! very hard,
E'en though "just cause" appear,
That thou shouldst not be with us now
This day, of all the year.





Te Deum.

PRAISE to Thee, the Great Creator,
Sitting on the Throne Divine,
Lord of Mercy! Lord of Power!
Be all Praise and Glory Thine!

Praise to Thee, the lowly Saviour,
Dying on the fatal Tree;
Thou for us hast fought, hast conquered,
Teach us how to worship Thee!

Praise to Thee, Eternal Spirit!
Let Thy sanctifying ray,
Shining on our fallen natures,
Wash each sinful stain away!

Christmas, 1855.





Vitang.

For ourselves, and for all others,
Wandering thro' the world astray,
For our weak and erring brothers,
Blessed Lord! we kneel to pray!

Hope to Thy bright presence soaring,
Love, and sweet Humility,
Faith all mysteries adoring,—
These we fain would ask of Thee!

When we rise or sink in sorrow,
Tossed on Life's uncertain wave,
When the Grave's dark path we follow,
Blessed Lord! be near to save!

Christmas, 1855.



Communion.

O LAMB OF GOD! Thy Life was freely given,
Upon the Cross Thy precious blood was shed,
That we, the children of offended Heaven,
Hopeful, in Duty's path once more might tread.

Still, tho' too oft our eye by Doubt is sealèd,
The symbols of Thy Marriage Feast we see;
Still hear the Promise in Thy Word revealèd,
Bidding the heavy-laden come to Thee!

Vouchsafe to all who in Thy courts are praying,
Thy special blessing, and Thy grace, that we,
In robes of spotless white our souls arraying,
Among Thy chosen guests in Heaven may be!

Christmas, 1855.

London:

PRINTED BY SMITH, ELDER AND CO.,

LITTLE GREEN ARBOUR COURT, OLD BAILEY, E.C.

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